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Contents

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The Attack on the U.S. Consulate: Emerging Signs of Jihadist Sentiment in Libya

By Geoff D. Porter

The president of Libya's General National Congress speaks near a portrait of the late U.S. Ambassador to Libya Chris Stevens. - Getty

ON SEPTEMBER 11, 2012, armed militants attacked the U.S. Consulate in Libya's eastern city of Benghazi, resulting in the deaths of four U.S. Foreign Service members, including U.S. Ambassador to Libya Christopher Stevens.[1] The Benghazi incident was preceded by other manifestations of extremist violence in Libya, such as earlier attacks on Western diplomatic facilities and personnel, a violent assault on the Tunisian Consulate in Benghazi in protest of an art exhibit in Tunisia, and the destruction of Sufi shrines throughout the country that

Salafists had deemed un-Islamic.[2] These incidents suggest that violence in Libya is evolving from predictable militaristic violence characteristic of guerrilla warfare to now include Salafi-jihadi terrorism.

In contrast to the violence during the revolution against the late Colonel Mu`ammar Qadhafi's regime, terrorism presents a unique security problem for Libya's ruling General National Congress (GNC).[3] It is motivated by a

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1 Details on the attack are still emerging, but initial evidence suggests that the attack was organized; however, information remains contradictory at this point. See Osama Alfitory, "Libyan Attacks Said to be 2-Part Militant Assault," Associated Press, September 13, 2012; Dina Temple-Raston, "U.S., Libyan Versions Of Consulate Attack Diverge," National Public Radio, September 20, 2012.

2 "Libya's Salafists in Search of Relevance," *Daily Star*, September 14, 2012; "Libya Sufi Shrines Attacked 'By Islamist Hardliners,'" BBC, August 25, 2012.

3 The General National Congress (GNC) is a result of a political process that was initiated in August 2011 by what was then known as the Transitional National Council (TNC). The TNC was a self-appointed body that had assumed governmental leadership functions for territory within Libya that rebel forces had seized from Qadhafi's military. With the death of Mu`ammar Qadhafi in Octo-

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different calculus from the previous kinds of violence faced by the National Transitional Council (NTC).[4] With Salafi-jihadi terrorism, the demands of the perpetrators of the violence are more holistic and nihilistic. This evolution presents different problems for the GNC in its efforts to provide security to Libya, and it poses new risks to the United States.

In the absence of an effective state security apparatus, violence in Libya is pervasive and there are a range of violent actors and agendas. The new Libyan state does not exert a monopoly on force and the line between state and non-state actors is blurred. Within this morass of violence, certain trends can be discerned and it is important to parse these groups, to distinguish among them, and anticipate how and when they will use violence. Some groups have used violence to achieve a limited, tangible goal. Others have used violence to settle scores or to demonstrate their relevance to post-Qadhafi Libyan power structures. Finally, and perhaps most concerning, others are beginning to use violence as an expression of their ideological commitment to Salafi-jihadi interpretations of Islam. This article will examine these three trends.

Violence to Achieve a Tangible Goal
Violence that occurred in Libya during the last 10 months was generally motivated by complaints that could be addressed—territory, the informal economy, release of "henchmen" from detention, and revenge against former members of the Qadhafi regime. In a certain sense it was utilitarian, with violence for the sake of achieving a

realizable goal. When possible, solutions were negotiated—often within hours.

The Tripoli airport seizure in June 2012 is perhaps the most high profile example of this trend. A militia from the town of Tarhouna seized the airport on June 4, 2012, because one of its leaders went missing.[5] The militia believed that he was kidnapped by another militia, or detained by the NTC.[6] The Tarhouna militia said that it seized the airport to call attention to the problem and to compel the NTC to act more quickly to find the missing leader. The NTC then sent an armed force, including members of the Zintan brigade, to contain the Tarhouna militia, as well as a delegation to begin negotiations regarding their demands.[7] By the end of the day, the Tarhouna militia agreed to return the airport to government authorities and normal operations were restored.

The incident at Tripoli airport fits into a pattern that emerged in Libya since Qadhafi's fall and is similar to protests at the Arabian Gulf Oil Company headquarters in Benghazi and the attack on former Prime Minister Abdelrahim al-Keib's offices in Tripoli in May.[8] Different groups appealed to the interim government seeking redress to a grievance or a complaint. The government was unresponsive, either due to lack of capacity or lack of interest, and the aggrieved party took a bold gesture to seize or attack a high profile installation. The action attracted greater attention to the problem and the standoff persisted while negotiations were undertaken. Once a resolution was negotiated, the aggrieved party withdrew. The goal has never appeared to be the permanent seizure of an installation, but rather to use the installation to amplify demands.

Political Violence and Revolutionary Aftershocks
Libya has also witnessed more conventional political violence. Beginning in late July 2012, there have been a string of assassinations in Benghazi. The assassinations targeted former members of Qadhafi's intelligence services, all of whom were allegedly on a "hit list" that includes up to 1,000 names.[9] Some of the attacks involved car bombs, while in other instances victims were shot. It is not known who carried out the attacks, but it is thought that possibly one or more local militias with grievances against the Qadhafi regime were responsible.

On August 19, 2012, for example, three car bombs exploded in Tripoli. The car bombs targeted administrative offices of the Ministry of the Interior and a building used by the Defense Ministry to detain and interrogate Libyans suspected of being supporters of the former Qadhafi regime.[10] The bombings killed two Libyans.[11] Local officials attributed the attacks to a group of men loyal to Qadhafi. After the attacks, security forces reportedly arrested 32 members of the group, which they said is intent upon sowing discord in the country and determined to discredit the GNC that was sworn in on August 8.[12]

Since then, doubts have emerged about who was genuinely behind the attacks. One theory postulates that they were undertaken by militias that had heretofore been incorporated into the political decision-making process, but now risk being marginalized after the swearing in of the GNC. A second theory is a mutation of the first. It claims that the bombings were an outward manifestation of competition among different security services such as the Supreme Security Council, Libya Shield, the High Security Council, the Tripoli Military Council, and the militias that are embedded within them. The interior minister, Fawzi Abdel Al, is a former leader of the Misrata militia,

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ber 2011, the TNC organized elections among its members to appoint a government, including a prime minister and a head of what was renamed the National Transitional Council (NTC). The NTC adhered to the political roadmap laid out in August 2011, and after passing an electoral law in February 2012 held national elections for a new congress on July 7, 2012. The new 200-member congress, known as the GNC, was sworn in on August 8, 2012. It immediately elected a leader for the congress, Mohammed Magarief, and organized a process whereby a new prime minister would be selected by congress members. The new prime minister, Mustafa Abushagur, was elected on September 12. The GNC will function as Libya's legislature until a constitution is drafted and ratified and new national elections are held, currently scheduled for the first half of 2013.
4 Ibid.

5 "Libyan Militia Takes Control of Tripoli Airport," *Boston Globe*, June 5, 2012.
6 "Flights Resume at Tripoli Airport After Seizure," BBC, June 5, 2012.
7 "Libyan Authorities Regain Control of Airport Seized by Gunmen," Agence France-Presse, June 5, 2012.
8 "Libya Police Put End to Protest at Oil Firm Agoco," Reuters, May 9, 2012; "Libyan Rebels Storm Prime Minister's Office," *Guardian*, May 8, 2012.

9 Information on this hitlist came from a personal contact of the author who is based in Benghazi.
10 Kareem Fahim, "2 Die in Libya as Car Bombs Strike Capital," *New York Times*, August 19, 2012; "Libya Arrests Gaddafi Loyalists Over Car Bombings," *Guardian*, August 19, 2012.
11 Ibid.
12 Ibid.

while the defense minister, Osama al-Juwaili, is the former leader of the Zintan brigade. The Misrata militia and the Zintan brigade are the two most powerful militias in Libya with the ability to deploy throughout the country. Both have vast arsenals at their disposal including tanks, war planes and helicopter gunships. The bombings were possibly a warning to the incoming government not to push them to the side and to continue to include them in the political process.

Elsewhere in the country, groups have clashed for a variety of reasons. In Kufra, political differences resulted in confrontations between the Tubu tribe and supporters of the NTC. The latter suspected that the Tubu were still loyal to Qadhafi whereas the former viewed the NTC supporters as carpetbaggers intent on benefiting from the change in leadership in Tripoli. In Bani Walid, tribes have clashed with one another over control of the lucrative black market that has emerged in the region.

Such violence is typical in a post-revolutionary state as various factions seek to find their place in the emerging power structures.

The Emergence of Salafi-Jihadi Terrorism

Although pervasive and persistent, none of the aforementioned violence has been definitively terrorism. What has now become clear is that among the range of violent non-state actors in Libya, there are Salafi-jihadi groups that harbor deep hostilities toward the United States. The Salafi-jihadi use of violence is different from other violence in Libya, as it is primarily ideological. The trends that led to the U.S. Consulate incident in Benghazi and the eventual deaths of four members of the U.S. diplomatic corps first began to emerge in post-Qadhafi Libya in June 2012, but its antecedents stretch back to the 1990s.

The first manifestation of Salafist violence in Libya was not strictly jihadist. The Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) was formed in 1990 as an Islamist opposition to the Qadhafi regime. Unlike Salafi-jihadis, the LIFG accepted the notion of Libya as a nation-state but it wanted to overthrow Qadhafi and establish Libya as an Islamic state. In 1996, it attempted to

assassinate Qadhafi, and in the wake of the attempt's failure Qadhafi launched a campaign to eradicate the LIFG. Some members of the LIFG were killed, others were imprisoned, and still others fled the country and joined forces with al-Qa`ida in Afghanistan.[13] By the 2000s, the LIFG had no active presence in Libya. During the Libyan revolution against the Qadhafi regime, former LIFG members who had been released from prison in 2009 following a "deradicalization" program unofficially restarted the LIFG and joined the rebellion. One former LIFG leader in particular, Abdelhakim Belhadj, formed his own militia, the Tripoli Military Council. Although hard figures are unavailable, Belhadj's group was believed to have as many as 25,000 fighters at its peak during the final days of the revolution.[14]

In 2006, with the seizure of the Sinjar Records in Iraq, it became clear that Salafi-jihadi ideology had grown popular in some parts of the country even though the LIFG was no longer active in Libya. The Sinjar Records indicated that Libyans were the second largest nationality represented among foreign fighters joining al-Qa`ida in Iraq.[15] Almost all of the Libyan fighters in Iraq hailed from eastern Libya, particularly the town of Derna—approximately 180 miles east of Benghazi.[16] Eastern Libya was deliberately and acutely neglected during Qadhafi's 42-year reign. While Tripoli boasts the buildings and infrastructure of a state that produces upwards of a million barrels of oil per day, including six-lane highways and high-rise commercial towers, eastern Libya is a patchwork of cities and towns linked by potholed roads, dilapidated buildings, and failing infrastructure. Social services such as hospitals,

schooling, and government housing are rundown and in short supply. The resentment in Benghazi toward western Libya is to such an extent that earlier in 2012 a group in Benghazi demanded that eastern Libya become an autonomous region within the sovereign state of Libya. Conditions progressively worsen toward far eastern Libya. A common analogy used to underscore the deplorable conditions in such towns as Derna is "Benghazi is to Tripoli as Derna is to Benghazi."[17]

The links between al-Qa`ida's Salafi-jihadi ideology and Libya were further solidified by Abu Yahya al-Libi. Abu Yahya, the brother of an LIFG leader, went to Afghanistan to fight in the jihad against the Soviet Union, but then left the country to study Islamic texts in Mauritania. Upon his return, the Soviet Union had abandoned its campaign in Afghanistan. The esteem in which he was held was augmented by his escape from U.S. custody in Afghanistan in 2005. He eventually joined al-Qa`ida and rose to second-in-command of the group following the killing of Usama bin Laden in May 2011.

In June 2012, a series of bombings and attacks on Western targets in Benghazi revealed Salafi-jihadi terrorism tendencies in Libya. On June 6, militants attacked the U.S. Consulate compound in Benghazi with an improvised explosive device (IED).[18] The IED was ineffectual, damaging the exterior walls of the compound. Four days later on June 10, 2012, a convoy carrying Dominic Asquith, the British ambassador to Libya, was ambushed.[19] A rocket-propelled grenade struck the convoy. The ambassador was unhurt but two bodyguards were injured.[20] During the same period there was an attack on the Tunisian Consulate in Benghazi in response to a controversial art exhibit in Tunisia.[21] The exhibit displayed a panel with dead insects arranged to spell "God" in Arabic.

13 Alison Pargeter, *The New Frontiers of Jihad: Radical Islam in Europe* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).

14 "Holding Libya Together: Security Challenges after Qadhafi," International Crisis Group, December 14, 2011; "Libyan Islamist Quits Militia to Enter Politics: Aide," Reuters, May 14, 2012.

15 Libyans formed the largest contingent of fighters per capita, but Saudis comprised the largest overall group of foreign fighters. Additionally, the Sinjar Records do not represent the total number of foreign fighters in Iraq, but a selection of approximately 600 foreign fighters.

16 Joseph Felter and Brian Fishman, *Al-Qa`ida's Foreign Fighters in Iraq: A First Look at the Sinjar Records* (West Point, NY: Combating Terrorism Center, 2007).

17 Personal observation, Benghazi, Libya, March 2012.

18 "Attack in Benghazi," U.S. Embassy in Libya, June 11, 2012.

19 "Libya Unrest: UK Envoy's Convoy Attacked in Benghazi," BBC, June 11, 2012.

20 Ibid.

21 "Gunmen Storm Tunisian Consulate in Benghazi," France24, June 18, 2012.

A group called the Brigade of the Imprisoned Shaykh `Umar `Abd al-Rahman claimed responsibility for the June 6 attack on the U.S. Consulate compound in Benghazi.[22] The attack was allegedly in retaliation for the U.S. assassination of al-Qa`ida member Abu Yahya al-Libi in Pakistan on June 4.[23] The group recorded a video of the attack in typical jihadist style.[24] Both the rationale behind the attack and the name of the group are clear al-Qa`ida references, but there may not be a direct affiliation with al-Qa`ida as of yet. As with the case of al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), its affiliation with al-Qa`ida only came after months of negotiations between AQIM's predecessor, the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), and al-Qa`ida's central leadership. Some analysts suggest that al-Qa`ida finally allowed the GSPC to become an al-Qa`ida affiliate after the GSPC attacked a vehicle belonging to a U.S. company in front of a U.S.-owned hotel in Algiers.[25] It is possible that the Brigade of the Imprisoned Shaykh `Umar `Abd al-Rahman is following a similar trajectory.

The other attacks—against the UK ambassador, the Tunisian Consulate, and ultimately the U.S. Consulate on September 11, 2012—are suspected of being carried out by a group called Ansar al-Shari`a (Supporters of Islamic Law).[26] Ansar al-Shari`a is a loose appellation for hardline Salafists throughout the Middle East, with groups in Libya, Tunisia and Yemen. It not clear whether, or to what extent, the groups are connected. Even in Libya itself, Ansar al-Shari`a has different branches in Benghazi and Derna. The degree of cooperation among the branches is uncertain.[27] Likewise, while

Ansar al-Shari`a in Libya may share some of al-Qa`ida's ideology, until recently there did not appear to be clear links between Ansar al-Shari`a in Libya and al-Qa`ida. Ansar al-Shari`a in Libya denies that it was involved in the deadly attack on the U.S. Consulate, although witnesses have said that the gunmen who attacked the consulate facility—armed with grenades and rockets—carried the Ansar al-Shari`a flag.[28]

Investigations into the recent consulate attack also suggest that AQIM may have been involved in the attacks. Multiple newspapers have interviewed U.S. officials saying that they intercepted communications between Ansar al-Shari`a and AQIM on September 11.[29] Other U.S. officials have denied such assertions.[30] It is premature to assume AQIM played a role in the incident.

Implications for Libya's New Government
The presence of Salafi-jihadi groups in Libya places the GNC in a difficult position. Like the NTC before it, the GNC does not have an effective military that can be reliably deployed, but unlike the NTC it cannot negotiate with Salafi-jihadis—since they are absolutists and reject negotiation—in the same way that the NTC was generally able to resolve conflicts with regional groups, militias and tribes. Salafi-jihadis not only want to rid Libya of non-Muslim influence like the United States and the United Kingdom—as well as Muslim practices that do not conform to their strict interpretation of Islam, such as the Sufism followed by many Libyans—

but also refuse to recognize the notion of a nation-state, the very institution that the GNC is trying to reconstruct in the aftermath of the Qadhafi regime. Although a popular backlash, followed by security force action, swept Ansar al-Shari`a and related groups from their bases on September 21-22, these militants are likely to regroup despite the more hostile operating environment.

There are no readily available statistics regarding how many troops the GNC has under its command. Weapons collection programs that the NTC had discussed at the beginning of its tenure to reduce the threat posed by militias and to reassert the state's monopoly on force have evaporated. The GNC is unable to reliably deploy forces to halt violence, whether it is of the more pragmatic nature that was endemic during the first 11 months following Qadhafi's death or the Salafist violence that has appeared more recently. When Salafist groups destroyed a Sufi shrine in downtown Tripoli on August 25, security services under the control of the Interior Ministry were unable or unwilling to stop them.[31]

Salafi-jihadi ideology has roots in Libya that reach back two decades and correspond to the rise of al-Qa`ida as the preeminent Salafi-jihadi organization. The lawlessness in Libya and the impotence of the GNC has allowed Salafi-jihadi violence to emerge once again. The GNC has no choice but to confront Salafi-jihadi sentiment directly. Without a functioning, effective military, however, it will be difficult to do so.

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22 `Umar `Abd al-Rahman was found guilty in U.S. courts for having masterminded the 1993 World Trade Center attack. See "Attacks on Western Targets in Libya Sow Fears of Islamist Extremists," *Washington Post*, June 15, 2012.

23 "Sources: U.S. Mission in Benghazi Attacked to Avenge al Qaeda," CNN, June 6, 2012.

24 The video can be viewed at www.youtube.com/watch?v=vhhyGB-ttMU.

25 Jean-Pierre Filiu, "Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb: Algerian Challenge or Global Threat?" Carnegie Papers, October 2009.

26 Robin Benejri, "Did Ansar al-Sharia Carry Out Libya Attack?" BBC, September 12, 2012.

27 Aaron Zelin, "Jihadism's Foothold in Libya," Wash-

ington Institute for Near East Policy, September 12, 2012.

28 Ahmed Maher, "Meeting Mohammad Ali al-Zahawi of Libyan Ansar al-Sharia," BBC, September 18, 2012; Mel Frykberg, "Ansar al Shariah, Linked to Diplomat's Death, Sets Benghazi Rally to Counter Calls for Moderation," McClatchy Newspapers, September 20, 2012.

29 According to the *Wall Street Journal*, "The [U.S.] officials said the AQIM leaders were communicating with members of Ansar al-Shari`a, a local group of Libyan militants, after seeing violent anti-U.S. protests breaking out in Cairo." See Siobhan Gorman and Adam Entous, "U.S. Probing al Qaeda Link in Libya," *Wall Street Journal*, September 14, 2012; Chris Stephen, "Libyan Parliamentary Speaker Hints at Military Strike after Consulate Attack," *Guardian*, September 16, 2012; Temple-Raston.

30 Josh Lederman, "UN Ambassador Says Libya Attack was Spontaneous," Associated Press, September 16, 2012.

31 Taha Zargoun, "Fighters Bulldoze Sufi Mosque in Central Tripoli," Reuters, August 25, 2012.

Identifying Three Trends in Far Right Violence in the United States

By Arie Perliger

IN THE MORNING hours of August 5, 2012, the Sikh temple at Oak Creek, Wisconsin, was crowded with children and mothers engaged in preparations for the *Langar*, a traditional Sikh communal meal scheduled to be held later that day. At around 10:00 AM, Wade Michael Page, a 40-year-old from nearby Cudahy, Wisconsin, arrived in the temple parking lot and started firing at the temple's inhabitants using a pistol purchased several days earlier. He then entered the temple and continued his killing spree until he was gunned down by police forces that arrived to the site. At that point, he had already killed six worshippers and a police officer.[1]

While details from the investigation have not yet been officially released, a growing body of evidence links Page to various far right elements, mainly the skinheads subculture and the white power music scene. As a result, policymakers and intellectuals expressed concerns about a potential revival of far right violence in the United States. Many of their responses also reflected common misconceptions and deficiencies that dominate the popular discourse about the American far right, such as the inability to distinguish between its different components, lack of understanding of its ideological tenets as well as the tendency to ignore the fact that American far right violence was never really absent; if anything, the level of far right violence has been rising steadily for the last two decades.

This article provides clarity on the various components of the American far right. It also offers a basic analytical model to better understand its current violent trends. The article's findings—which are based on a dataset of more than 4,400 cases of violent attacks by far right elements during a 22-year period—will be expanded in a more detailed study that will soon be published by the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point.

Typology of the American Violent Far Right

Three major ideological trends can be identified within the American violent far right: racist, anti-federalist and fundamentalist. The ideological characteristics of the various groups impact their operations in terms of tactics used and target selection.

Racist Trend

The ideological trend most familiar to Americans is the racist one, which is comprised of white supremacy groups such as the Ku Klux Klan (KKK), neo-Nazis such as the National Alliance, and skinhead groups such as the Hammerskin Nation. The racist groups are interested in preserving or restoring what they perceive as the appropriate and natural racial and cultural hierarchy by enforcing social and political control over non-whites—such as African Americans, Jews and various immigrant communities. Their ideological foundations are based mainly on ideas of nativism (rejection of foreign norms and practices), racism, segregation and xenophobia. Other popular components of the far-right ideology—including strong affinity for order and social control, traditional values and anti-democratic dispositions—are manifested by some of these groups, but are usually secondary.

Since the mid-1980s, many of the racist groups framed their ideas in a defensive context and started to utilize "civil rights" rhetoric, usually presenting themselves as dedicated to the promotion or protection of the white race, and preserving their heritage and culture. Other groups, however, intensified their usage of Nazi heritage, symbols, rituals and ideological foundations to justify and promote anti-Semitic, racist and nativist ideas, as well as exclusionism. More specifically, since some of these groups believe that territorial and racial purity is a condition for the survival of the "white race," they developed the idea of enforced segregation, including concrete "programs" to eliminate inferior races, expel others or divide the United States into racially homogeneous geographical areas.

In terms of target selection, and in line with the trend's ideology, the great majority of attacks perpetrated by these groups are aimed against individuals or organizations affiliated with a specific minority ethnic group, or non-Aryan facilities (mosques, synagogues, or schools affiliated with minority communities). While the KKK is heavily involved in acts of vandalism, the skinheads and the neo-Nazi groups are more engaged in attacks against human targets and show a higher affinity for mass casualty attacks.

Anti-Federalist Trend

The anti-federalist trend (which is usually identified in the literature as the "militia" or "patriot" movement) appeared in full force only in the early to mid-1990s with the emergence of groups such as the Militia of Montana and the Michigan Militia. Anti-federalist and anti-government sentiments existed in U.S. society before the 1990s via diverse movements and ideological associations promoting anti-taxation, gun rights, and a "survivalist" lifestyle. Yet most scholars concur that the "farm crises" of the 1980s combined with the implications of rapid cultural, technological and normative changes in American society, as well as attempts to revise gun control and environmental legislation, facilitated the emergence of a fairly ideologically cohesive movement, as well as its rapid growth.[2]

Ideologically, anti-federalists are interested in undermining the influence, legitimacy and practical sovereignty of the federal government and its proxy organizations, such as the U.S. military or Federal Bureau of Investigation.[3] This rationale is multifaceted, and includes

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1 Page was shot in the abdomen during a firefight with police. He then shot himself in the head.

2 Richard Abens, *American Militias* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1996), pp. 7-20; Joel Dyer, *Harvest of Rage* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998), pp. 24-44; Kathlyn Gay, *Militias: Armed and Dangerous* (Springfield, NJ: Enslow Publishers Inc., 1997), pp. 36-52.

3 A development that may be responsible for the growing concern and awareness of a militia movement revival is the popularity of the Sovereign Citizen movement. Simply put, the Sovereign Citizen movement opposes formal governmental regulations of their "basic rights" such as "driving the land" (thus, Sovereign Citizen members will refuse to apply for, or to have, a driver's license and car registration) or working for a living (thus refusing to pay taxes). Several violent incidents involving Sovereign Citizen members, including the killing of two West Memphis, Arkansas, police officers during a traffic stop in May 2010, provided an indication that some members of the movement were indeed willing to use violence to protect and follow their principles.

the belief that the U.S. political system and its proxies have been hijacked by external forces interested in promoting a New World Order (NWO),[4] in which the United States will be absorbed into the United Nations or another version of global government; strong convictions regarding the corrupted and tyrannical nature of the federal government and its related natural tendency to intrude on individuals' civilian lives and constitutional rights; and finally, perceptions supporting civilian activism, individual freedoms, and self governing the way they were manifested in the frontier culture in U.S. history, especially during the Revolutionary War and the expansion to the American west. Hence, anti-federalist groups see themselves as part of a struggle to restore or preserve the United States' "true" identity, values and "way of life" and as the successors of the country's founding fathers.

Recent research conducted by this author shows that in the case of the anti-federalist trend there is compatibility between ideological tenets and operational characteristics. Two-thirds of the attacks by anti-federalist groups were directed against the government and its proxies, such as law enforcement (65.8%); while attacks against minorities (11%) and infrastructure (6.1%, which could also be seen as attacks against the government) comprise most of the rest.

Fundamentalist Trend
The fundamentalist trend, which includes mainly Christian identity groups such as the Aryan Nations, merges religious fundamentalism with traditional white supremacy and racist tendencies. It promotes ideas of nativism, exclusionism, and racial superiority via a unique interpretation of religious texts that focus on division of humanity according to primordial attributes. More specifically, these groups maintain that a correct interpretation of the holy texts reveals that it is not the people of Israel but the Anglo-Saxons who are the chosen people. Moreover, the war between the forces of light and darkness,

as portrayed in the Bible, will be (or has already been) manifested via racial war between the white Anglo-Saxon nation and various non-Anglo-Saxon ethnic groups such as the "Children of Satan" (Jews) and "mud people" (non-whites). The identity groups tend to utilize religious heritage, symbols, rituals and norms to instill and spread these ideas, as well as to provide moral justification for, and encouragement to, political activism against elements that are threatening the materialization of the appropriate sociopolitical order.

Operationally, identity violence focuses on minorities and has a higher tendency to involve mass casualty attacks (in comparison to the other two trends).[5]

The Iceberg Model and American Far Right Violence
In the early 1980s, the Israeli political scientist Ehud Sprinzak published a paper on the irredentist Israeli religio-political movement Gush Emunim (The Bloc of the Faithful) entitled "The Iceberg Model of Political Extremism."[6] He argued that the Gush is best understood not as a classical protest movement, but as the extremist tip of a large social and cultural "iceberg," in effect a religious subculture, which supports and nurtures the Gush. Pyramidal in structure, this iceberg—Gush's social and political bases of support—broadens as one moves from the politically extremist tip to the less extremist base. Based on analysis of 4,400 cases of violent attacks by far-right elements in a 22-year period, the iceberg model could be applicable for understanding some of the characteristics of the American violent far right as well.

5 There are two reasons for this. First, some scholars have suggested that the more the group's agenda is framed in religious and totalistic ideas, the more it will be willing or determined to use exceptionally lethal tactics. Second, while the skinheads and KKK members are in many cases a part of the social fabric of a specific community, this is not the case with many members of identity groups. This isolation, which creates a social distance between members of the group and mainstream society, may serve not just as a breeding ground for radicalization, but may facilitate a stronger sense of alienation toward the mainstream culture and willingness to engage in extreme, harmful activities.

6 Ehud Sprinzak, "Gush Emunim: The Iceberg Model of Political Extremism," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 21 (1981): pp. 28-47.

To begin with, the American far right is characterized by a large base of supporters (the base of the "iceberg") who are usually engaged in low level violence (usually minor incidents of vandalism or low sophisticated attacks against individuals) and are not affiliated with any formal organizational frameworks (for example, just one percent of the attacks by unaffiliated members includes the use of firearms or explosives, well below what could be observed in any of the other trends). Based on the body of literature developed in the last few years regarding political radicalization, it is possible to carefully assume that the perpetrators of these attacks are the future recruitment potential of the more institutionalized organizations. In other words, after crossing the line and performing some minor attacks on their own initiative, at some point these individuals may look for more organized, systematic mechanisms to express their ideas for political activism, and thus will join one of the other, more formal, streams of the American far right toward the top of the iceberg.

If this perspective is indeed a reflection of the movement's structure and dynamics, then the United States may be facing a continuous rise in the level of violence, especially since the last six years have been characterized by an overall increase in the "base" of the iceberg (i.e., there has been an increase in the number of low sophisticated, unaffiliated and spontaneous attacks, which have been followed by an increase in the number of mass casualty attacks). It should be noted that most of these low sophisticated/spontaneous attacks have received relatively little attention from the media, political authorities and law enforcement, while the few mass casualty attacks attracted most of the attention.

Which groups contribute most to the tip of the iceberg, and which are closer to its base? The findings show that the KKK (and on some level anti-abortionists), with its current informal and fragmented structure and low level of operational sophistication, is the formal movement that is closest to the base of the iceberg (and may be the first station for those joining the "formal" American far right). The higher one "climbs" to the top of the iceberg, the more lethal

4 They believe in the existence of a conspiratorial organization allegedly masterminding events and controlling world affairs through governments and corporations to establish a New World Order (see, for example, the Illuminati movement, which originated initially in 18th century Germany).

the group's attacks and the smaller they are in volume. Therefore, following the KKK, the order can be ranked as follows from least to most lethal: skinheads, militias, neo-Nazi groups and finally attacks perpetrated by individuals or groups affiliated with the Christian identity movement. To illustrate, while Christian identity elements perpetrated "just" 66 attacks in the last 22 years, their attacks generated close to three victims per attack on average. The skinheads, which are part of the racist trend, were responsible for more than 200 attacks, but averaged close to one victim per attack.

While the model is not perfect,[7] overall it seems that the iceberg model fits the findings, as there is a clear base which is wider in terms of the number of attacks but is less "sharp" (in lethality), while the narrower parts of the iceberg are indeed sharper and more lethal.

Conclusion

Conventional wisdom suggests that the most damaging and dangerous mass of an iceberg is actually the section that is underwater. Indeed, the high volume of far right violence reflected in vandalism and attacks against individuals is probably a better indication of the growing threat from the far right than the small number of mass casualty attacks. A group or individual will rarely engage in mass casualty attacks without first moving through the lower base of the iceberg by engaging in low profile attacks. A rise in the number of low profile attacks should eventually result in an increase in mass casualty attacks.

In more specific terms, the findings reflect a steady rise in the level of far right violence in the United States during the last two decades. While some far right groups are clearly in decline, such as the KKK and anti-abortionists, others such as the skinheads, neo-Nazis and militias are still active and represent a growing threat.

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7 For example, excluding the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995, militias generated fewer victims than the neo-Nazi groups, despite engaging in a lower number of attacks.

Factors Responsible for Al-Shabab's Losses in Somalia

By Hussein Solomon and Alexander Meleagrou-Hitchens

IN SOMALIA, THE al-Shabab militant group is suffering setback after setback. The African Union Mission in Somalia's (AMISOM) forces have pushed the group out of Mogadishu as well as other territory throughout southern Somalia. Its last significant stronghold is in Kismayo, a strategic port city. As AMISOM forces converge on al-Shabab's key refuge, the militant group has transformed from a Shari`a-enforcing body to a weakened band of insurgents.

Based on recent fieldwork in Nairobi, Kenya,[1] this article examines the three primary factors behind al-Shabab's recent setbacks: the successful model provided by AMISOM; clan rivalries within al-Shabab; and al-Shabab's mishandling of the regional drought in 2011. The article also identifies the challenges facing the Somali government as it begins to strengthen its position against what has until recently been an intractable foe.

AMISOM: A Model for Success

Formed by the African Union (AU) in February 2007, AMISOM is currently mandated until January 16, 2013, by the United Nations as a peacekeeping force and to assist the Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and its successor, the National Constituent Assembly (NCA),[2] in efforts to fight al-Shabab. AMISOM has operated in the country since March 2007, and it consists primarily of troops from Uganda, Kenya, Burundi, Djibouti and Sierra Leone.

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1 The authors conducted fieldwork in Nairobi, Kenya, between July 1-8, 2012.
2 The TFG's United Nations mandate officially expired on August 20, 2012, and it has been replaced by the National Constituent Assembly (NCA). In early September, the NCA elected Somalia's new president, Hassan Sheik Mohamud. For more, see M.L. Roach, "Somalia's Government Transition Maintains the Status Quo," Heritage Foundation, August 20, 2012; "Inauguration of Somalia's New President Begins," Associated Press, September 16, 2012.

A turning point for AMISOM was in August 2011 when African troops together with TFG forces pushed al-Shabab out of the capital Mogadishu. A number of reasons account for this turnaround, including more troop contributions from member states, greater coordination between AMISOM and TFG forces, and reported training of Somali intelligence operatives by the Central Intelligence Agency.[3] Since then, AMISOM remains on the offensive and its numbers have been augmented by troops from Djibouti and Kenya. The involvement of the Kenyan Defense Forces (KDF), which is well equipped and includes a relatively large navy and air force, has greatly contributed to recent achievements against al-Shabab. In addition, Ethiopia, which is not part of AMISOM, has redeployed troops into Somalia, capturing Beledwyne, and has moved rapidly into the central regions of Hiraan and Galgadud and further still into the Shabelle River Valley. The KDF has liberated Gedo and Juba while AMISOM forces spearheaded by the Ugandans have pushed al-Shabab more than 100 miles from the capital, Mogadishu.

Several countries concerned with the growing al-Qa`ida presence in the Horn of Africa have welcomed the AMISOM mission. "What we've seen here is a marked increase in African countries' capacities and willingness to successfully address challenges," affirmed Matt Goshko, an official at the Somali Affairs Unit in the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi.[4] While it is undoubtedly receiving foreign (and especially U.S.) assistance, AMISOM is a body made up of African troops who have responded to an African crisis at the direction of an African political organization. The AU members have shown a willingness and desire to act swiftly and largely independently to ensure their own national security and protect lucrative tourism industries. In addition, the Burundian and Ugandan soldiers who have pushed al-Shabab out of Mogadishu have gained valuable

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3 Personal interview, senior AMISOM counterterrorism official, Nairobi, Kenya, July 2012; Jeffrey Gettleman, Mark Mazzetti and Eric Schmitt, "U.S. Relies on Contractors in Somalia Conflict," *New York Times*, August 10, 2011.
4 Personal interview, Matt Goshko, U.S. Embassy, Nairobi, Kenya, July 2, 2012.

experience in urban warfare, which may pay dividends in other areas in the Horn of Africa.

Today, al-Shabab has consolidated influence in the strategic port city of Kismayo, and AMISOM forces have surrounded the city in preparation for a major offensive. Kismayo holds strategic importance as the financial lifeblood of the jihadist militia. For months, al-Shabab has generated revenue by taxing the production, transport and export of charcoal produced in the region. Kismayo is home to the country's main port from which coal is exported to Saudi Arabia, Oman and the United Arab Emirates.[5] Shutting down this significant stream of income by capturing the city is therefore one of the primary military objectives of AMISOM before its mandate expires.

After preparing their offensive for weeks, reports surfaced in mid-September that Kenyan troops were pushing into Kismayo.[6] Voice of America interviewed residents who witnessed al-Shabab fighters fleeing the city after suffering losses from Kenyan troops.[7]

Internal Clan Divisions
Al-Shabab also appears weakened by internal divisions among the group's leadership. Most analysis suggests that this disagreement is centered on the group's merger with al-Qa`ida. In February 2012, Mukhtar Abu al-Zubayr (also known as Godane), one of the more ideologically committed jihadists in al-Shabab's leadership, oficially announced this new partnership.[8] The courting of al-Qa`ida is believed by some to be the reason for a rift between Godane and another leader, Hassan Dahir Aweys, who does not appear as devoted as Godane to the global jihadist appeal.

Aweys is the former head of Hisbul Islamiyya, a militia that fought against and then merged with al-Shabab in late 2010 once it became clear that victory was unattainable.[9] Aweys' past suggests

he is opportunistic and willing to back the stronger horse as the situation changes on the ground. Not only did he cut a deal with al-Shabab when he was head of Hisbul Islamiyya—albeit from a position of weakness—but in 2006 he resigned from the leadership of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) when it began losing control of Mogadishu.[10] Rumors abound that he is now seeking to sit down with the Somali government as it begins to strengthen and his own allies lose ground.[11] Aweys may be opposed to the al-Qa`ida elements in al-Shabab, but he is far more concerned with staying alive and in power.

Clan loyalties, which reign supreme in the region, cannot be ignored when looking at splits within the group. For example, after a 2010 battle known as the First Ramadan Offensive, when al-Shabab tried, and failed, to wrest control of Mogadishu from AMISOM and TFG troops, cracks began to emerge. Shaykh Mukhtar Robow—a senior al-Shabab leader and member of the Rahanweyn clan that reportedly comprises a majority of the group's foot soldiers—supposedly became incensed that his clan bore the brunt of the casualties.[12] "Robow was said to be livid that his troops were being used as cannon fodder," said Matt Goshko of the Somali Affairs Unit in the U.S. Embassy, Nairobi. "His guys were reportedly being pushed to the front lines while foreign fighters were at the back. There was no medical help and several sources claimed that wounded fighters were killed after the defeat."[13]

The 2011 Regional Drought
Al-Shabab's mismanagement of a regional drought in mid-2011—which was among the worst for a generation—may later be seen as the heaviest blow to the group. Although the drought affected the entire region, it was only in the southern Bakool and Lower Shabelle areas controlled by al-Shabab where it also led to a famine. According to the United Nations, around three million people in al-Shabab-controlled areas of Somalia were without enough food.[14] This was in large part due to the militia's refusal of foreign aid, which it saw as an attempt to undermine its authority and help spread Western influence. Al-Shabab spokesman Shaykh Ali Mohamud Rage even suggested that "the declaration of famine is political and is a lie with hidden agendas," asserting that Somalia was only suffering from "a shortage of rain."[15] From this time on, al-Shabab has struggled to convincingly present itself as the provider of order and justice, which was a big factor in the ICU's successful bid for power in 2006.

The mishandling of the drought and famine also likely contributed to clan divisions among the leadership.[16] Godane, a member of the Isaaq tribe based in Somaliland—which was hardly affected by the famine—publicly refused Western aid while Robow's Rahanweyn clan starved. Robow's request to accept the aid was ignored, and he is unlikely to have forgiven Godane and his allies.[17]

Al-Shabab Still Dangerous
While al-Shabab is no longer in control of southern Somalia, the group is still dangerous. It has ceased to be a viable political alternative to the Somali government and is moving back to its roots as a local insurgency.[18] AMISOM will have to adapt its tactics to respond to this new change in battle-space, and it will have to be more effective at

5 "Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1916 (2010)," United Nations Security Council, July 18, 2011.
6 "Witnesses: Al-Shabab Pulling Out of Major Somali Port," Voice of America, September 16, 2012.
7 Ibid.
8 Nelly Lahoud, "The Merger of al-Shabab and Qa`idat al-Jihad," CTC Sentinel 5:2 (2012).
9 Bill Roggio, "Hizbul Islam Joins Shabaab in Somalia,"

The Long War Journal, December 19, 2010; Mary Harper, Getting Somalia Wrong: Faith, War and Hope in a Shattered State (London: Zed Books, 2012).
10 Bill Roggio, "The Fall of the Islamic Courts Union," The Long War Journal, December 27, 2010.
11 "One of the leaders, Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys, has reportedly sought to defect to the government side, together with Sheik al-Amriki, and Sheikh Mukhtar Robow," in "Kenya: Al Shabaab Chiefs Defect After Rout by KDF Forces," The Star [Nairobi], September 7, 2012.
12 Harper.
13 Ibid.; personal interview, Matt Goshko, U.S. Embassy, Nairobi, Kenya, July 2012. For more, see Valentina Soria, "Global Jihad Sustained Through Africa," Royal United Services Institute, April 2012.

14 "Somalia: Humanitarian Access Analysis," United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, March 2012.
15 "Al-Shabab Reasserts Foreign Aid Ban," al-Jazira, July 22, 2011.
16 "Al-Shabaab Leadership Rift Widens," Somalia Report, July 14, 2011.
17 Personal interview, senior AMISOM counterterrorism official, Nairobi, Kenya, July 2012; "Could Somali Famine Deal a Fatal Blow to al-Shabab?" BBC, August 9, 2011.
18 Personal interview, senior AMISOM counterterrorism official, Nairobi, Kenya, July 2012.

protecting crucial trade routes from kidnappers and bandits.

Instead of engaging in conventional warfare with AMISOM, al-Shabab fighters are melting back into their clan militias.[19] This makes it almost impossible for AMISOM to identify the enemy. Moreover, given the fierce bonds of clan loyalty, there is little information being shared between clan elders and the AMISOM forces.[20] Safely ensconced in these militias, al-Shabab has increasingly embraced an asymmetric warfare strategy against both AMISOM and the TFG.

In addition, al-Shabab has shown its ability to strike in the countries that are fighting them in Somalia. One of the initial motivations for Uganda's involvement in an aggressive military engagement with al-Shabab was a July 2010 dual bomb attack in Kampala that killed 76 and threatened the country's tourism industry.[21] Since then, the group has also executed grenade and gun attacks in Kenya. The most recent of these was a massacre of 17 congregants at a church in Garissa, a town on the Kenyan border with Somalia.[22]

Ahmed Iman Ali, a Kenyan former preacher who has recently emerged as a senior al-Shabab commander in charge of non-Somali militia members, has threatened further attacks on Kenya in reprisal for their encroachment into what he sees as "Muslim lands."[23] These threats are not empty, and Kenyan officials are concerned about his ability to coordinate attacks in Nairobi and Mombasa that are likely to be carried out by a new breed of homegrown Kenyan jihadists.

The TFG and the Future of Somalia
As the military challenges confronting AMISOM ease, the complexities of Somali politics are likely to take center stage. The notoriously corrupt TFG has earned the ire of Somalis

for stealing development aid, and it appears to be snatching defeat from the jaws of victory. According to one senior AMISOM counterterrorism official, the TFG has failed to provide basic services to areas liberated from al-Shabab control. There have also been reports that Somalis are unhappy that local leaders who have replaced former al-Shabab leaders often do not come from the majority clan in the area and are put in place by the central authority.[24] Thus, the TFG has struggled to gain legitimacy, while AMISOM is perceived by many as a foreign occupying force. Under the circumstances, the AMISOM official lamented that "we are winning the battles and losing the war."[25]

To win the fight against al-Shabab, the international community must lean on the TFG and NCA to be more responsive to Somali needs, and increase its capacity to do so where appropriate.[26] It is also important to develop a closer interface between the military strategy and the political vision post-Kismayo.

What would a new, more inclusive political vision entail? To understand the central problem in the current political order one cannot ignore the 2002-2004 Somali peace conference that proposed a clan quota for the distribution of power, and which persists to this day. This clan quota is more commonly known as "the 4.5 formula" where the four refers to the majority clans of the Darood, Hawiye, Dir, and Rahanweyn, and the 0.5 refers to all the minority clans.[27] Under this formula, if one belongs to a minority clan, it means that they likely have to resign themselves to occupying junior positions in government.

Even among the four main clans, rivalries are strong. The weakest among them is reportedly the Rahanweyn, who some look disparagingly upon as farmers and peasants.[28] It is not a

coincidence, therefore, that many of al-Shabab's foot soldiers belong to the Rahanweyn; membership in al-Shabab affords them more money, power and status. By stressing a radical Islamist identity as opposed to a clan identity, weaker clans can also merge with other clans to check the power of their main rivals. The jihadist identity developed by al-Shabab has in the past successfully provided minority clans with an alternative vehicle through which to access power.

Conclusion
Al-Shabab is now at its weakest. It is facing internal divisions, possible defections and the most sustained and well coordinated military challenge to its authority since its rise to power. The desire and determination of AMISOM—in particular its Ugandan and Kenyan contingents—to rid Somalia of jihadists shows no sign of abating, and it continues to enjoy the support of the United Nations.

It is premature, however, to assume that the group is close to defeat, and al-Shabab is likely to maintain a lethal presence as an insurgency in the country. It also has a proven ability to respond by attacking neighboring countries involved with AMISOM. Nonetheless, AMISOM has cleared the way for yet another attempt to bring long-term stability to a population that has never experienced it. It is now up to Somalis, with the help of the African Union and the West, to determine the future of their country.

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19 Ibid.

20 Ibid.

21 "Why is Uganda Fighting in 'Hellish' Somalia?" BBC, March 15, 2012.

22 "Red Cross: Kenya Church Attacks Kill 17 Near Somali Border," CNN, July 1, 2012.

23 Ahmed Iman Ali, video lecture, April 2012, copy in authors' possession.

24 Personal interview, senior AMISOM counterterrorism official, Nairobi, Kenya, July 2012.

25 Ibid.

26 For a critical assessment of the NCA, see Roach.

27 Nastasya Tay and David Smith, "Somalia's First Parliament Since 1991 Inaugurated in Mogadishu," *Guardian*, August 20, 2012.

28 Kenneth Menkhaus, "Somalia: A Situation Analysis and Trend Assessment," United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, August 2003.

Taliban Militants Striking Pakistan from Afghan Territory

By Zia Ur Rehman

SINCE THE START of the current Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan, U.S.-led NATO forces and the Afghan government have blamed much of the violence on militants based in Pakistan's tribal areas. Insurgents from groups such as the Haqqani network are able to plan operations from their bases located in Pakistan's tribal areas, cross the border into Afghanistan, execute attacks, and then retreat back into the relative safety of Pakistan.

Yet in the last two years, the issue of cross-border attacks has become even more complicated. Pakistan itself is now victim to Pakistani Taliban militants who are sheltering in Afghanistan, crossing the border into Pakistan to conduct attacks, and then retreating back across the Afghan border.[1] Pakistani officials assert that these militants are part of the Pakistani Taliban factions that once pressed for power in the Swat Valley, but were forced to flee into Afghanistan during a successful Pakistani military operation in 2009. Pakistan believes that these militants have regrouped in the border region and are now confident enough to carry out large-scale, cross-border attacks on Pakistani targets.

Seventeen large-scale, cross-border incursions of militants from Afghanistan to Pakistan have occurred in the last six months.[2] Most of the attacks were carried out in Bajaur Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), an important agency for the Taliban and al-Qa`ida because it shares a border with Kunar Province in Afghanistan—a strategic province from which NATO forces have largely withdrawn.

This article examines the trend of Pakistani Taliban militants using Afghanistan as a staging ground for attacks in Pakistan. It reviews a few key cross-border attacks and speculates whether these operations are part of a larger Taliban strategy.

Cross-Border Attacks

In 2011, security in the border areas remained volatile, with 69 reported clashes and cross-border attacks that killed 225 people.[3] Pakistani military commander Major General Ghulam Qamar asserted that since February 2012, there have been 17 major cross-border incursions where Pakistani Taliban fighters entered Pakistan from Afghanistan to attack Pakistani interests.[4] The incursions have mainly occurred in Bajaur and Mohmand agencies in FATA and Dir and Chitral districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province.

On June 24, 2012, for example, an estimated 100 militants belonging to Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) entered Pakistan's Upper Dir District from Afghanistan's Kunar Province and killed 17 Pakistani soldiers.[5] A few days later, the militants released a video showing the severed heads of the 17 soldiers.[6] The video included a statement from Hakimullah Mehsud, the TTP's leader, and Maulana Fazlullah, head of the TTP's Swat chapter.

On July 12, dozens of Pakistani Taliban militants crossed from Afghanistan's Kunar Province into Pakistan and took scores of villagers hostage, including members of an anti-Taliban militia in the Katkot area of Bajaur Agency.[7] Pakistani forces quickly surrounded the village, killing eight militants.[8]

More recently, Pakistani Taliban militants sheltering in Afghanistan attacked security checkpoints at Inkle Sar and Miskini Darra areas of Samar Bagh Tehsil in Lower Dir District on August 24.[9] The militants were reportedly members of the TTP's Dir chapter led by Hafizullah.[10]

Also on August 24, hundreds of Pakistani Taliban militants crossed into Pakistan from Kunar Province and attacked security personnel as well as a local tribal militia known as the Salarzai Qaumi lashkar in the Batwar area of Bajaur Agency.[11] Security forces responded, which led to heavy fighting that resulted in the deaths of 30 militants and an estimated six members of the security forces.[12] Fifteen members of the security forces, however, went missing.[13] On August 31, TTP militants released a video showing the severed heads of the 15 soldiers.[14]

Taliban Hideouts in Afghanistan

Pakistani security officials and local tribal elders assert that these cross-border attacks into Pakistani territory have been executed by militants belonging to the Bajaur, Swat and Dir chapters of the TTP, with help from Afghan Taliban militants. Following the Pakistan military's operations in Swat, Dir and Bajaur in 2009, militants led by Maulana Fazlullah were pushed out of Pakistani territory, and they reportedly fled into Kunar and Nuristan provinces in Afghanistan. From Afghanistan, they prepared for cross-border attacks on Pakistani security forces.[15] With NATO troops largely withdrawing from Kunar and Nuristan throughout 2011, Pakistani analysts suspect that the operating environment has become more conducive to Pakistani Taliban fighters.

The TTP itself has admitted that they use Afghan soil as a springboard to launch attacks on Pakistani security forces—even though the Afghan Taliban deny it.[16] Sirajuddin, a spokesperson for the TTP's Malakand chapter, said that Maulana Fazlullah is leading militant attacks and remains in contact with Pakistani Taliban fighters based in Pakistan's Malakand division.

1 "Pakistan Accuses Afghanistan of Backing Taliban Enemy," Reuters, August 5, 2012.

2 *Daily Azadi* [Swat], September 7, 2012.

3 "Pakistan Security Report 2011," Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies, January 2012.

4 *Daily Azadi* [Swat], September 7, 2012.

5 "Taliban Release Video of Beheaded Pakistani Soldiers," Agence France-Presse, June 27, 2012.

6 Ibid.

7 "Militants Take Villagers Hostage in Bajaur," *Dawn*, July 12, 2012.

8 Ibid.

9 "Taliban Attack Security Posts in Lower Dir," *Express Tribune*, August 24, 2012.

10 Ibid.

11 BBC Urdu, August 27, 2012; personal interview, member of Salarzai Qaumi Lashkar, September 3, 2012; "At Least 28 Militants Killed in Bajaur Agency," *Dawn*, August 25, 2012.

12 Ibid.

13 Anwarullah Khan, "Militants Release Video of Beheaded Soldiers," *Dawn*, September 1, 2012.

14 Ibid.

15 Personal interviews, elders of Salarzai Qaumi Lashkar, Khar town, Bajaur Agency, Pakistan, March 25, 2012.

16 Tahir Khan, "Cross-Border Cooperation: Ties That Bind Militants Persist," *Express Tribune*, July 8, 2011.

Sirajuddin claimed that Fazlullah commands more than 1,000 fighters who move regularly across the porous border between Afghanistan and Pakistan.[17] The exact number of TTP militants in Afghanistan is not known, but Pakistani Major General Athar Abbas said that 200 to 300 militants have been mounting cross-border attacks in Dir, Chitral and Bajaur.[18]

Firm evidence of the TTP's use of Kunar Province came to light when the head of the TTP's Bajaur chapter, Mullah Dadullah, was killed in a U.S. airstrike in Shigal district of Kunar Province on August 24, 2012.[19] Dadullah, whose real name was Jamal Said, had a close association with senior members of al-Qa`ida from 2003 to 2007, according to tribal sources. He was the chief of the TTP's moral police and head of the Taliban's treasury.[20]

Media reports suggest that Qari Ziaur Rehman, a key al-Qa`ida commander who is from Kunar, as well as Shaykh Dost Muhammad, a Nuristan-based Afghan Taliban leader, are hosting the Pakistani Taliban militants.[21] Rehman is thought to have once been a close confidante of Usama bin Ladin and hosted him temporarily after his escape from the Tora Bora Mountains in 2001.[22] Rehman was sheltered by the Pakistani Taliban in Bajaur Agency for years, and he is now reportedly returning the favor.[23]

Broader Strategic Plan?
Some analysts believe that violence on both sides of the border is a coordinated strategy of al-Qa`ida, the TTP and the Afghan Taliban to damage ties among Islamabad, Kabul and Washington by

increasing mutual distrust. Former Afghan Defense Minister Shahnawaz Tanai explained that Taliban elements in both countries helped each other during the fight against the Soviet Union, and this same cooperation extends today.[24] The TTP's use of so-called "safehavens" in Afghanistan mirrors the Afghan Taliban's successful use of safehavens in Pakistan.

Other experts argue that the recent rise in cross-border attacks is part of a coordinated strategy to prevent a Pakistani military operation against the Haqqani network.[25] Karachi-based security expert Raees Ahmed believes that the TTP has escalated attacks in Bajaur in response to an impending army operation in North Waziristan, which would coincide with U.S. or Afghan military action against TTP bases in Afghanistan.[26] Militants may be seeking to carve out territory in Bajaur so that they can threaten violence in the settled areas of Malakand division in case Pakistan and the United States coordinate a military offensive.[27]

Conclusion
The recent cross-border incursions on both sides of the border clearly show that Pakistan, Afghanistan and NATO have all failed to clear the strategically important border areas of militants, permitting previously dispersed extremist organizations to regroup and prepare new, large-scale attacks in both countries. Although security forces have begun operations to repel further attacks, they are unlikely to be successful until they deal collectively with the issue of cross-border militancy—a problem to which there are no easy solutions.

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Reviewing Pakistan's Peace Deals with the Taliban

By Daud Khattak

BY THE END OF 2014, normal U.S. combat forces are scheduled to withdraw from Afghanistan. As this departure date approaches, Afghanistan and its U.S.-led allies continue to explore potential peace deals with the Afghan Taliban. At the same time, the Pakistani government is reportedly considering its own peace talks with factions of the Pakistani Taliban—the conglomerate responsible for daily small-arms and suicide bomb attacks in Pakistani territory.[1]

Since the emergence of the Pakistani Taliban, Islamabad has entered into a handful of peace deals with factions belonging to the group—both written and unwritten—in attempts to placate the militants. Most of these peace deals, however, resulted in the further strengthening of the Pakistani Taliban, and only a few of the agreements lasted beyond a few months. Violence flared not long after the agreements became effective, and the Pakistani Taliban then demanded even further concessions from the government. The only exception was the situation in the Swat Valley, where the government launched an aggressive military operation against the Pakistani Taliban after the peace deal failed to render any results. In that case, the Mullah Fazlullah-led Pakistani Taliban faction was forced to flee the Swat Valley, and that region remains in control of the government today.

This article reviews the key peace agreements reached between Islamabad and various Pakistani Taliban factions, and it assesses whether the deals achieved their objectives.

The Shakai Peace Agreement, April 2004
In April 2004, the Shakai agreement was reached between Nek Muhammad Wazir of the Pakistani Taliban and the Pakistani government.[2] The peace deal was the first of its kind since the

17 Tahir Khan, "TTP Admits to Having Safe Haven in Afghanistan," *Express Tribune*, June 26, 2012.

18 Zia Khan and Naveed Hussain, "Border Incursions: Suspicions Grow about Afghan Support for TTP," *Express Tribune*, September 11, 2011.

19 Declan Walsh, "Pakistani Militant Leader Dies in Airstrike, NATO Says," *New York Times*, August 25, 2012; Javed Hamim Kakar and Khan Wali Salarzai, "Key Haqqani, TTP Leaders Killed in Drone Strikes," Pajhwok Afghan News, August 25, 2012.

20 Zia Ur Rehman, "On the Borderline," *Friday Times*, September 7-13, 2012.

21 Khan, "Cross-Border Cooperation: Ties that Bind Militants Persist."

22 Khan and Hussain.

23 Ibid.

24 Khan, "Cross-Border Cooperation: Ties that Bind Militants Persist."

25 "Understanding with US on Joint Action Against Haqqanis," *Dawn*, August 6, 2012.

26 Ibid.

27 Personal interview, Raees Ahmed, security analyst, Karachi, Pakistan, September 4, 2012.

1 Tahir Khan, "Talks With Govt Suspended: TTP Leader," *Express Tribune*, September 1, 2012.

2 Rahimullah Yusufzai, "Profile: Nek Mohammed," BBC, June 18, 2004.

emergence of the Taliban in Pakistan, and it would become the cornerstone of future such agreements between the government and militants in the tribal areas.

The deal came after the government launched a military operation in March 2004 to pressure Nek Muhammad to cease supporting foreign militants, such as Arabs, Chechens and Uzbeks in South Waziristan Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). After the military operation was ineffective, and Pakistan sustained heavy casualties, the government entered into the Shakai agreement with Nek Muhammad.[3] As part of the peace deal, the Pakistani government agreed to release Taliban prisoners, pay compensation to tribesmen for property damage as a result of its military operations, and provide money to the militants so that they could repay their debt to al-Qa`ida.[4] For his part, Nek Muhammad agreed to register foreign militants and stop cross-border attacks into Afghanistan.

At the time of the signing, Nek Muhammad was a relatively obscure militant. When Pakistan's military leaders sat down with Nek Muhammad, who was only in his 20s, it provided him stature he previously did not have, and it also reduced the importance of the area's tribal elders as well as the centuries-old tribal system that had always been the method for resolving disputes.

Immediately after the signing of the agreement, Nek Muhammad refused to surrender foreign militants to the government, and his faction began to assassinate tribal elders who helped negotiate the agreement.[5] The government then revoked Nek Muhammad's amnesty deal, and launched another military operation against his faction in June 2004.

The Shakai agreement proved to be a failure, and what eventually stopped Nek Muhammad was a missile fired from a U.S. drone, which killed him in June 2004.[6]

Srarogha Peace Agreement, February 2005

In February 2005, the Pakistani government reached a peace agreement with Baitullah Mehsud of the Pakistani Taliban in the Srarogha area of South Waziristan Agency.[7] The government entered into peace negotiations with Baitullah after it recognized that Taliban attacks were spreading from the Ahmadzai Wazir areas to the Mehsud areas of South Waziristan. The government hoped to contain further Taliban expansion.

The deal reportedly specified that the government would compensate militants for homes razed or damaged during military operations.[8] The government also agreed not to target Baitullah Mehsud or his supporters. In response, the Mehsud militants did not have to lay down their weapons, nor did they have to surrender foreign militants in their ranks. The agreement only stipulated that they cease attacking Pakistani targets and refuse to give shelter to foreign militants. Similar to the case of Nek Muhammad, the military's deal with Baitullah conveyed the message to all tribal leaders in South Waziristan that Baitullah was now the area's strongman, providing him a new level of stature.

Clashes between the military and Taliban militants in South Waziristan increased in the subsequent months. The violence continued for years, proving that the peace deal served no purpose other than to prolong and spread militancy.

By July 2007, Pakistani security forces killed notorious militant leader Abdullah Mehsud, and Baitullah Mehsud himself was eventually killed by a U.S. drone strike in August 2009. Yet the organization he founded remains strong today, now led by Hakimullah Mehsud.

The Swat Agreement, May 2008

Since 2001, the Swat Valley suffered growing unrest after a cleric, Maulana Fazlullah, established a religious seminary and later delivered radical sermons to the local population through an illegal FM radio station. Fazlullah's followers pursued a number of extremist policies, such as preventing girls from attending school and demanding that women not visit markets unless wearing burqas, or full body veils. After Pakistani security forces raided the *Lal Masjid* mosque in Islamabad in July 2007—an event that has had lasting contributory effects on militancy in Pakistan—Fazlullah's struggle for the implementation of Shari`a took a more violent form.[9]

The violence continued until the newly-elected government in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province came to power in 2008.[10] The coalition government consisted of two secular parties—the Awami National Party and Pakistan People's Party—and it hastily extended the offer of peace talks to the Taliban in Swat, hoping that their disagreements could be resolved through negotiations.

Following a series of meetings and discussions between Taliban representatives and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government both in the Swat Valley and in Peshawar, on May 21, 2008, the two sides reached a 16-point agreement to bring an end to violence and restore peace to the valley.[11]

Within days of inking the peace deal, disagreements arose. The Taliban refused to surrender their arms as stipulated in the agreement, demanding that the government first withdraw troops from the valley. They also demanded the release of Taliban prisoners held by Pakistan. Within a month, the militants began attacking government officials and installations, as well as destroying electronics shops and schools. This caused the government to launch the military operation Rah-e-Haq.[12]

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3 Personal interview, Brigadier (retired) Mahmood Shah, former secretary of security for FATA, September 3, 2012. Shah was the key figure in the negotiation process with the tribal elders and drafting the agreement. Also see "Nek Mohammed," PBS Frontline, undated.

4 "Nek Mohammed."

5 Ibid.

6 David Rohde and Mohammed Khan, "Ex-Fighter for Taliban Dies in Strike in Pakistan," *New York Times*, June 19, 2004.

7 Personal interview, Brigadier (retired) Mahmood Shah, former secretary of security for FATA, September 3, 2012.

8 Amir Mir, "War and Peace in Waziristan," *Asia Times Online*, May 4, 2005.

9 Griff Witte, "Raid at Islamabad Mosque Turns Long and Deadly," *Washington Post*, July 11, 2007.

10 Zakir Hassnain, "NWFP Cabinet Takes Oath," *Daily Times*, April 3, 2008.

11 Daud Khattak, "Text of Govt's Agreement with Taliban," *Daily Times*, May 22, 2008.

12 "Militants Pull Out of Talks in Swat," *Dawn*, June 30,

This was followed by some of the worst violence to hit Swat, as schools were destroyed, police stations and army convoys attacked, and civilians kidnapped and beheaded. The violence only stopped when the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provincial government agreed to implement the Shari`a-based Nizam-e-Adl regulation in Swat on February 15, 2009.[13] This led to Fazlullah declaring a cease-fire.

Even that agreement, however, failed in a month, and Swat suffered another bout of violence. Emboldened by the government's concessions, the Fazlullah-led Taliban overran Mingora in May 2009, the commercial center of the Swat Valley, paralyzing the government.[14] The Taliban then pushed into neighboring Buner and Shangla districts, only 60 miles from Pakistan's capital city.[15] The Taliban advance toward Islamabad rang alarm bells among the government and the military, and caused Pakistan to launch a decisive military operation against Maulana Fazlullah and his fighters.[16] Within two months of the major military operation, Maulana Fazlullah fled the Swat Valley, and many of his commanders were either arrested or killed.[17]

In the final analysis, the Swat agreement proved counterproductive, and merely allowed the Taliban to grow in strength during "peace" times. Once the Taliban were in a strong enough position to challenge Pakistan's writ even further, they took that opportunity by moving into Mingora, and then Buner and Shangla districts. Moreover, the government's failure to arrest or kill Maulana Fazlullah has come back to hurt the Pakistani state, as in the last few months he has been responsible

for multiple attacks on Pakistani targets from his mountain redoubt in Afghanistan.[18]

Other Peace Deals/Understandings
Apart from the three major peace agreements in Shakai, Srarogha and Swat, Pakistan entered into unwritten peace deals with various militant groups in the tribal areas. One controversial agreement is with the North Waziristan-based commander Hafiz Gul Bahadar, who is mainly involved in cross-border attacks into Afghanistan. The Pakistani government and Bahadar's faction have basically agreed that in exchange for not attacking Pakistani interests, Islamabad will not target Bahadur.[19] Bahadur's fighters move around freely in North Waziristan today.

A similar, but more covert deal was reportedly reached with militant commander Faqir Muhammad in Bajaur Agency after Operation Sherdil in August 2008.[20] Once the military operation concluded, there were various reports that Pakistani security forces had reached a non-aggression pact with the Bajaur militants.[21] Based on conversations with stakeholders in Bajaur, this secret agreement stipulates that Faqir Muhammad's Taliban faction will not target Pakistani security forces nor kill civilian targets in areas where the security forces operate; in exchange, Pakistani security forces will not target Faqir Muhammad's militants.

Authorities also entered into an unwritten agreement with Lashkar-i-Islam in Khyber Agency after Operation Sirat-e-Mustaqeem in June 2008.[22] Similar to the two agreements in Waziristan, Khyber authorities agreed to compensate the militants for property damage during the operation, as well as release several individuals held on charges of having ties to militants. Yet the agreement was quickly violated, and troops remain present in Khyber where they continue to conduct operations.

Conclusion
By reviewing Pakistan's various peace agreements with Taliban militants, a number of commonalities become evident. All of the agreements were signed from a position of government weakness, and thus the militants were able to achieve significant concessions. The government never enforced its demands of disarmament or the surrendering of foreign militants. In the majority of cases, the government provided significant financial compensation to the militants on the pretext of property damage. This money likely exceeded the actual cost of damages, in effect providing militants funding for future operations.[23] Moreover, the agreements had the effect of adding prominence to militant leaders.

None of the agreements with Taliban factions involved in attacks in Pakistan lasted for more than a few months, and the breaking of each agreement resulted in severe bouts of violence including attacks on government installations, security forces and civilians.

From the Taliban's perspective, by leveling demands at the government and then entering into negotiations, it demonstrates to civilians in the tribal areas that militant leaders are strong enough to sit at the same table as the country's top military officials. This solidifies support for the Taliban among their followers, and suppresses the voices of resistance from civilian populations living under their authority.

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2008.

13 Daud Khattak, "Govt, TNSM Agree on Nizam-e-Adl in Malakand," *Daily Times*, February 16, 2009.
14 "Taliban Take Over Mingora," *Daily Times*, May 5, 2009.
15 Pamela Constable, "Defiant Taliban Forces Advance to Within 60 Miles of Islamabad," *Washington Post*, April 24, 2009.
16 Bill Roggio, "Pakistan Launches Operation against the Taliban in Buner," *The Long War Journal*, April 28, 2009.
17 In this case, however, although Fazlullah was forced out of Pakistan's settled areas, he now is reportedly attacking Pakistan repeatedly from Afghanistan's Kunar Province.

18 Zia Ur Rehman, "Taliban Militants Striking Pakistan from Afghan Territory," *CTC Sentinel* 5:9 (2012).
19 "Anti-US Rant: 'Peace Treaty to Stay Intact Despite Polio Drive Ban,'" *Express Tribune*, June 20, 2012.
20 "Bajaur Mission Fulfilled," *Dawn*, September 1, 2008.
21 "Peace-Making Denials Expose Taliban Divisions," *Express Tribune*, December 12, 2011.
22 Daud Khattak, "Mangal Bagh to Abide by Bara Peace Agreement," *Daily Times*, July 12, 2008.

23 The author has viewed first-hand damage to property in the tribal areas, and government compensation to militants has far exceeded the actual property damage.

The Micro-Level of Civil War: The Case of Central Helmand Province

By Ryan Evans

THE OFFICIAL AIM of the war in Afghanistan is to deny al-Qa`ida a safe haven.[1] The conventional narrative of this war, however, places the U.S.-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and the Afghan government against the Taliban and the Haqqani network in a war over the political future of the country.[2] This narrative is deceptive and ignores the overwhelming localism of the conflict.

This article will assess the history of central Helmand Province's "micro-conflicts," which revolve around factionalism, land and water, and the opium industry. It argues that the war in Afghanistan and civil wars more generally are best understood by a two-fold approach that examines alterations in social relations over time. This approach: 1) assesses local conflicts at the micro-level and understands how these aggregate into larger-scale conflict and effects; and 2) shows how macro-level political shifts destabilize existing social relations at the micro-level.[3] Without using both avenues of analysis, understanding of any civil war will be incomplete.

In Afghanistan, Western senior military leaders and decision-makers have focused on dispositional macro-level accounts as if larger events were disconnected from the micro-level.[4] This article is intended to serve as a small corrective measure.[5]

Micro-Conflicts

Afghans engage in violent and non-violent politics for predominantly local reasons that often have little to do with any national or transnational cause. Conflict in Afghanistan is driven by a confusing aggregation of "micro-conflicts"—the localized, enduring conflicts and rivalries driving politics within the government and the larger insurgency. A large-scale counterinsurgency campaign has not resolved or substantively addressed these micro-conflicts; it has only aggravated them. Moreover, this argument implies that a national reconciliation process between the Afghan government—itself a house divided many times over—and the leadership of the loosely structured Taliban movement will not mitigate these micro-conflicts and lead to peace.

More often than not, these micro-conflicts are decades old, each with unique histories at the provincial, district, and village levels. The constant recurrence of conflict in Afghanistan during the last 30 years can be traced to these micro-conflicts. Indeed, their constancy is one of several reasons to understand the last three decades of conflict in Afghanistan as a civil war with multiple phases.[6] People choose sides (factions within the government, factions within the insurgency, narcotics cartels, or a mixture of all three) based

on where their enemies sit, their own family loyalties, and where they believe they can best access resources to prevail against their local opponents. The case of central Helmand Province illustrates this dynamic.

Factionalism: U.S. Development, the Soviet-Afghan War, and the Mujahidin Civil War

From the 1950s to the early 1970s, the United States funded a large-scale agricultural development project, the Helmand-Arghandab Valley Authority.[7] Modeled on the Tennessee Valley Authority, the project aimed to improve and expand irrigation systems in the Helmand river valley to increase the province's arable land. From 1952 to 1973, successive waves of migrants from across Afghanistan settled on these new lands, disrupting traditional patterns of land ownership and inter-tribal relations.[8] The arrival of these tribally diverse migrants had a long-term destabilizing effect that upset the balance of power among Helmand's "indigenous" Pashtun tribes, originally granted land there by Ahmad Shah Durrani in the 1700s.[9]

Still, Helmand's traditional power-brokers—the khans of the province's "original" tribes—managed to maintain a modicum of stability. Khans were (and, in far fewer cases, remain) elite landholders who served as arbiters of disputes, landlords, providers of "social credit," political and social leaders, and patrons of mullahs and religious scholars. They connected the state to the community, interacting with government officials, and serving as proxy officials.[10]

When the Communist People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) overthrew the regime of Mohammad Daud Khan in 1978, the party's radical Khalq[11] faction

1 Barack Obama, "Remarks by the President in Address to the Nation on the Way Forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan," U.S. White House, December 1, 2009.

2 ISAF's official mission: "In support of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, ISAF conducts operations in Afghanistan to reduce the capability and will of the insurgency, support the growth in capacity and capability of the Afghan National Security Forces, and facilitate improvements in governance and socio-economic development in order to provide a secure environment for sustainable stability that is observable to the population." See www.isaf.nato.int/mission.html. Also see "Talking About Talks: Toward a Political Settlement in Afghanistan," International Crisis Group, March 26, 2012; Richard Barrett, "Talking to the Taliban," *Foreign Policy*, August 20, 2012; Mohammad Masoom Stanekzai, *Thwarting Afghanistan's Insurgency: A Pragmatic Approach toward Peace and Reconciliation* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Institute of Peace, 2008).

3 Charles Tilly, *Identities, Boundaries & Social Ties* (London: Paradigm, 2005), pp. 23-44.

4 In public statements, senior military and ISAF leaders discuss the insurgency as a macro-level phenomenon rather than as an aggregation of local conflicts. See, for example, Michael O'Hanlon, "O'Hanlon: My Interview with General John Allen," CNN, March 26, 2012; "Martha Raddatz Interviews Gen. John Allen in an Exclusive from Afghanistan," ABC News, March 5, 2012; Bob Woodward, *Obama's Wars* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010).

5 Modified segments of this article will also appear in the forthcoming co-authored report: *Talking to the Taliban: Ending the Chaos of Good Intentions* (London and Washington, D.C.: The International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence, the Center for National Policy, forthcoming).

6 Ryan Evans, "The Once and Future Civil War in Afghanistan," The AfPak Channel, July 26, 2012.

7 Richard B. Scott, *Tribal & Ethnic Groups in the Helmand Valley, Occasional Paper #21* (New York: The Asia Society Afghanistan Council, 1980).

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 For more on khans, see: John W. Anderson, "There are no Khans Anymore: Economic Development and Social Change in Tribal Afghanistan," *Middle East Journal* 32:2 (1978); John W. Anderson, "Khan and Khel: Dialects of Pakhtun Tribalism," in Richard Tapper ed., *The Conflict of Tribe and State in Iran and Afghanistan* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983).

11 The Afghan communist party, the People's Democratic

instituted a series of land, economic, and debt reforms that attacked the khan system in Helmand and elsewhere. To the Khalqis, the khans were oppressive feudal overlords who kept Afghan peasants mired in backwardness. While there is some truth to this assessment, it ignores the benefits the khan system provided for both state and society—namely stability.[12]

Taking advantage of the disruption caused by these reforms, opportunistic "climbers," like the infamous Akhundzada family of a lesser branch of the Alizai tribe, the Hasanzai, began

> "Land disputes have determined on which side of the fence people stand: with the government or with the insurgents. It is not uncommon for multiple families to have a legal title to the same land from different regimes."

to launch attacks against the khans and their supporters, as well as the Afghan state and Soviet troops who intervened in 1979.[13] As Antonio Giustozzi explained, this phenomenon was not exclusive to Helmand: "new social groups emerged with a vested interest in prolonging the

conflict, while existing social groups were transformed by it. Communities everywhere armed themselves to protect against roaming bandits and rogue insurgents."[14]

As rebellion spread and Helmand's "moral economy"[15] fragmented, families, tribes, and sub-tribes split along the lines of competing national-level mujahidin parties with provincial franchises.

Membership in these parties was not primarily based on preference for one ideology or the other, but rather on which party would best serve local interests for local conflicts and as a reaction to the Soviet intervention in 1979. For example, Helmand had one of the largest Khalqi membership bases in the country,[16] as the relatively impoverished and disenfranchised migrants had the least to lose and the most to gain politically, socially, and economically from Khalqi reforms at the expense of the traditional elites and earlier migrants who had been allotted more land.[17]

Hizb-i-Islami was the most popular anti-Soviet mujahidin party in the Barakzai-dominated river valley between Gereshk and Lashkar Gah.[18] The Barakzai were the old rural elite of Helmand Province who had the most to lose to Khalqi reforms and usurpers. The Akhundzadas joined the anti-Soviet Harakat-i-Inqilab-i-Islami mujahidin group. Rivals in other Alizai sub-tribes joined other mujahidin parties, out of opposition to the Akhundzadas.[19] Yet Helmandis did not reliably choose their faction solely based on tribal or sub-tribal membership. Other factors included inter- and intra-family feuds, local village disputes, and land disputes. For the most part, the Hizbis in Helmand cared little for the revolutionary Islamist doctrine of the party's national leader, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.[20] For them, his group served as a convenient provider of weapons, materiel, and logistics for local conflicts as well as anti-Soviet and anti-government resistance.[21]

Upon the withdrawal of Soviet forces and the later collapse of the Najibullah regime, the province endured a confusing civil war between mujahidin parties and various state-sponsored militias. This war ended shortly after the Akhundzadas' Harakat-i-Inqilab-i-Islami consolidated control over most of the province.[22] The Taliban swept through the province in late 1994 and early 1995. Many mujahidin fled to Pakistan and Iran, while others joined the Taliban.[23]

During the U.S.-led invasion in 2001, the Taliban in Helmand were mainly overthrown by militias led by Sher Mohammad Akhundzada and his allies. Sher Mohammad Akhundzada, who had married into the Karzai family, became Helmand's first post-Taliban governor

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Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), split into two factions in 1967, two years after it was founded. The Khalq faction, led by Nur Muhammad Taraki and Hafizullah Amin, was more radical than the Parcham faction and also more predominantly Pashtun—Afghanistan's largest ethnic group which is concentrated in the south and east of the country. While the Parcham faction was content to pursue a communist state more patiently, the more radical Khalq faction launched the Saur Revolution in 1978, overthrowing the regime of Mohammad Daud Khan. See Barnett R. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), pp. 82, 92-95, 111-121.

12 Rubin, pp. 111-121, 142-145; Scott.

13 *Mad Mullahs, Opportunists, and Family Connections: The Violent Pashtun Cycle* (Williamsburg, VA: Tribal Analysis Center, 2008); *Putting it Together in Southern Afghanistan* (Williamsburg, VA: Tribal Analysis Center, 2009); *Afghanistan: Helmand's Deadly Provincial Politics - Competition and Corruption* (Arlington, VA: Courage Services, 2009).

14 Antonio Giustozzi and Niamatulah Ibrahimi, *Thirty Years of Conflict: Drivers of Anti-Government Mobilisation in Afghanistan, 1978-2011* (Kabul: Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, 2012).

15 The moral economy approach begins with the assertion that human interchange and economic activity are "submerged" in social relations and that "historically, the provisioning of humans—the securing of their livelihood—was located in, or integrated through, noneconomic institutions (e.g., kinship, religion, and politics)." Economic relations are thus an integral part of social relations and while they are variable across cultures and geography, "they are molded, in their ends and instruments, by non-economic forces." See William James Booth, "On the Idea of the Moral Economy," *The American Political Science Review* 88:3 (1994): p. 653; Samuel Popkin, "The Rational Peasant," *Theory and Society* 9:3 (1980): pp. 411-471; Jeremy M. Paige, "Social Theory and Peasant Revolution in Vietnam and Guatemala," *Theory and Society* 12:6 (1982): pp. 699-736.

16 Personal interviews, Gereshk, Parschow, and Lashkar Gah, Afghanistan, January, May and August 2011. All interviews cited were conducted in the author's capacity as a Human Terrain Team Social Scientist between November 2010 and August 2011. The interview subjects were all Afghan nationals and included farmers, merchants, security force officials, elders, and militia leaders. Also see Antonio Giustozzi, *Empires of Mud: War and Warlords in Afghanistan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), pp. 64-65.

17 Scott; Giustozzi and Ibrahimi.

18 Personal interviews, Gereshk and Babaji, Afghanistan, January and March 2011.

19 *Putting it Together in Southern Afghanistan*; Antonio Giustozzi and Noor Ulla, "'Tribes' and Warlords in Southern Afghanistan, 1980–2005" (London: Crisis States Research Centre, 2010), pp. 9-13.

20 Ibid; personal interviews, Gereshk and Parschow, Afghanistan, January, March and April 2011.

21 Giustozzi and Ullah.

22 Ibid.; Anthony Davis, "How the Taliban Became a Military Force," in William Maley ed., *Fundamentalism Reborn? Afghanistan Under the Taliban* (New York: New York University Press, 1998); Rubin, pp. 245-264.

23 Ibid.

in 2001. He worked to sideline mujahidin and former Khalq rivals until he was fired in 2006 for heroin trafficking.[24] When he left the governor's office, he was appointed to the upper house of the Afghan parliament and, remarkably, claimed to send 3,000 of his own men to fight on the side of the Taliban, his former enemy.[25] Sher Mohammad Akhundzada was not taking up the Taliban's cause, but rather ensuring that the men in his patronage network would still be paid, thus maintaining his powerbase in Helmand.

During Sher Mohammad Akhundzada's rule and since, factional disputes have defined violent and non-violent politics in Helmand. It is one of the few provinces where former Khalqis are politically ascendant, occupying key district governor and senior police slots as well as the provincial governor's office. More often than not, these former Khalqis enjoy antagonistic relationships with former mujahidin counterparts and especially former Hizb-i-Islami commanders. These former mujahidin are often also in the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), but others—and their children—have joined the insurgency. Just as people joined various mujahidin parties or the government to gain allies and resources to pursue their local interests, people join the Taliban movement for the same reasons.[26]

At the Root: Land and Water
The Khalqi land reforms represented one of several land tenure regimes that have been in place in Helmand since the end of the reign of King Zahir Shah (1933-1973). Land reforms were enacted by Mohammad Daud Khan, the PDPA regime, various mujahidin parties in the early 1990s, the Taliban, and the current regime.[27] As noted by

Conor Foley, "if the root cause of the conflicts that wreaked such devastation in Afghanistan could be summarized in a single word, it would probably be 'land.'"[28] Since Helmand has a predominantly agricultural economy, land is the foundation of all wealth in the province. The alternative is poverty. In the case of Helmand, there are three important land-related problems driving conflict: competing claims, state refusal to recognize land claims, and land usage.

Competing claims to land are common causes of tension between brothers, families, villages, and tribes. Land disputes have determined on which side of the fence people stand: with the government (or a faction therein) or with the insurgents (or a faction therein). It is not uncommon for multiple families to have a legal title to the same land from different regimes.

The state's refusal to recognize land claims is at a crisis point. The Afghan government currently only recognizes land claims for which they have issued deeds as well as for "customary" deeds dating before 1975.[29] This has left those who received land in the Daud or PDPA reforms without a legal claim. It also alienates those granted land from the Taliban in the 1990s, such as the Ishaqzai in Sangin. The end result is the vast majority of rural landholdings in Helmand are not recognized as legal by the Afghan government. This is part of the reason why the Ishaqzai, for example, are seen as a "troublesome" tribe affiliated with the Taliban. Affiliation with the Taliban provides them some measure of protection against the government's predatory tendencies.[30]

Occasionally, corrupt or indignant Afghan officials will take a hard line on "squatters"—a term that can be applied to a farmer whose family has been working the same land for 20 years. For example, the former mayor of Lashkar Gah and the police longed after the village of Muhktar north of the provincial capital overlooking the Helmand River, which began as a refugee settlement over a decade ago and has since matured into a sizable village. The mayor occasionally directed his allies in the police to foray into the village and allegedly destroy homes, sometimes killing civilians.[31] These actions incentivize cooperation with the insurgency, if only for protection against the state.[32]

Disputes over land usage typically relate to poppy cultivation. The size of a plot, land quality and water availability can determine what crop is economically feasible for a farmer to grow. As such, growing poppy is—for these reasons and others—often not a matter of choice, but a question of survival. The costs of agriculture are considerable, requiring an investment

> **"If conflict in Helmand can be primarily attributed to land tenure, the narcotics trade is a close second."**

of cash or credit in fertilizer, fuel for diesel-powered water pumps, labor, and transport to bring crops to market. After all of this money is spent by farmers—particularly tenant farmers and those with small landholdings—and the bulk of their licit crops are set aside for self-consumption, it becomes difficult for them to turn even a modest profit. These factors, combined with the family expenses mentioned above, make poppy a more appealing crop due to its higher value.

24 Personal interviews, Gereshk, Afghanistan, January 2011; Damien McElroy, "Afghan Governor Turned 3,000 Men Over to Taliban," *Telegraph*, November 20, 2009.

25 McElroy.

26 Personal interviews, Gereshk, Afghanistan, January-February 2011.

27 Richard F. Nyrop and Donald M. Seekins, *Afghanistan Country Study* (Washington, D.C.: American University, 1986), pp. 183-189; *Land Tenure and Property Rights in Afghanistan* (Washington, D.C.: USAID, 2010); Liz Alden Wily, *Land Rights in Crisis: Restoring Tenure Security in Afghanistan* (Kabul: Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, 2003), pp. 42-50.

28 Conor Foley, "Housing, Land, and Property Restitution Rights in Afghanistan," in Scott Leckie ed., *Housing, Land, and Property Rights in Post-Conflict United Nations and Other Peace Operations: A Comparative Survey and Proposal for Reform* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

29 In 1975, the first of a series of land distribution laws in Afghanistan began. The Afghan government's current position is designed to restore landholdings to the "golden era'" of King Zahir Shah, before the Daud and PDPA land reforms. See Liz Alden Wily, *Rural Land Relations in Conflict: A Way Forward* (Kabul: Afghan Research and Evaluation Unit, 2004).

30 The Afghan state tends to adhere rather strictly to Tilly's observation that war-making and state-building are, in essence, large-scale organized crime. See Charles

Tilly, "War and State Making as Organized Crime," in Peter Evans et al. eds., *Bringing the State Back In* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 169-191.

31 Personal interviews, Mukhtar village, Helmand Province, Afghanistan, December 2010.

32 Ibid.

This is especially the case in areas with lower quality agricultural land in Helmand.[33] In these areas, the water level in irrigation ditches is so low and the ditches so deep that farmers must subsist on water pumped up from these ditches and wells using diesel-powered pumps.[34] This makes their yearly expenditure in fuel enormous.[35] The necessity of growing poppy to compensate for such costs brings them into conflict with ISAF and parts of the state. When poppy is eradicated, enduring hatreds arise that drive people to support the Taliban.

If conflict in Helmand can be primarily attributed to land tenure, the narcotics trade is a close second.[36]

Poppy and the Opium Industry: The Renewable Resource of Conflict

Although poppy had long been grown on a smaller scale in Helmand, the Akhundzadas legitimized its broader cultivation in the 1980s and turned it into a province-wide industry. Harakat-i-Inqilab-i-Islami controlled the supply of poppy and Hizb-i-Islami ran the processing centers in an uneasy, often disrupted, balance of power.[37] Poppy cultivation was briefly banned by the Taliban in the late 1990s, but experienced a resurgence following their overthrow.[38] Poppy is the renewable resource of conflict in Helmand. Conflicts between various factions within the government and between the government and the insurgency are often driven by competition over access to and control over the narcotics industry.

Helmand has been the largest poppy-producing province in Afghanistan by a considerable margin. With the eradication program in Helmand wiping out only three percent of the yearly crop, at the cost of alienating struggling farmers whose meager poppy profits barely get them and their families through the year, the utility of this counternarcotics program is questionable at best.[39]

In Helmand, there is a "Gray Nexus" among the Afghan government, narcotics cartels, the insurgency, and the population based on a common interest in poppy cultivation, processing, and trafficking. The insurgency serves as a protection and transportation racket for the cartels. It also plays a role in surging migrant farmers to help with the harvest in the spring and, in some areas, the insurgents offer farmers protection against eradication efforts. Poppy cultivation and narcotics trafficking represent the most important source of revenue for the Taliban in southern Afghanistan.[40] Government officials profit by allowing and facilitating trafficking. It is not uncommon for government officials in Helmand to be more directly involved in cultivation, processing, trafficking and facilitation. Poppy profits, which are modest for farmers, provide enough cash for a family to meet its costs of living. These profits also serve as a form of insurance for family illnesses, failed crops, drought, and any needed repairs.[41]

Conclusion

It is vital to use two avenues of analysis to understand the conflict in Helmand Province and civil wars more generally: 1) assessing local conflicts at the micro-level and understanding how these aggregate into larger-scale conflict and effects; and 2) understanding how macro-level political shifts destabilize existing social relations at the micro-level.

The complex micro-conflicts that drive conflict in this part of Afghanistan are unique to Helmand, but equally complex local issues are at play in every province and every district in Afghanistan. These micro-level developments are linked to important shifts at the macro-level. Two important findings can be observed.

The Afghan state implemented political, economic, and social reforms that attacked the prevailing system of social arrangements and hierarchy on the micro-level in Helmand in the mid- and late-1970s and 1980s. These reforms destabilized this system, broke its "moral economy," and created incentives for cross-boundary opportunism. Different social groups that lived side by side for decades, despite longstanding tensions, began to engage in violent attacks against each other, politicizing pre-existing social identities and forming coalitions and alliances with macro-level organizations—including the Khalq faction of the PDPA, Hizb-i-Islami, Harakat-i-Inqilab-i-Islami, and other mujahidin and militia groups.

At the same time, Pakistan likely seeks to prevent a strong Afghan government from emerging, as Islamabad prefers a weak buffer state to maintain strategic depth against India and avoid encirclement. To achieve this, and to keep a modicum of stability in its own restive Pashtun regions, Pakistan must also blunt Pashtun nationalism. Exploitation of these micro-level conflicts through and with limited support for the Haqqani network and the Taliban allow them to accomplish all of these goals.

Focusing solely or mostly on either the micro- or macro-level of analysis will provide an incomplete understanding of a conflict, leading to poorly gauged policy and strategic prescriptions in the case of military intervention, development aid, covert assistance to one or more parties, or even "moral support."

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33 This information is based on the author's work with the Human Terrain Team from the Task Force Helmand Area of Operations, which encompassed Nahr-e-Saraj district, eastern Nad-e-Ali district, and Lashkar Gah Municipality, from November 2010 to August 2011.

34 Ibid.

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid; Giustozzi and Ibrahimi, p. 45.

37 Vanda Felbab-Brown, *Shooting Up: Counterinsurgency and the War on Drugs* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2009).

38 Ibid.

39 This information is based on the author's work with the Human Terrain Team at main operating base Lashkar Gah, Helmand Province, from November 2010 to August 2011.

40 Michelle Nichols, "Taliban Raked in $400 Million from Diverse Sources: U.N.," Reuters, September 11, 2012.

41 Ibid.

Recent Highlights in Terrorist Activity

August 1, 2012 (IRAQ): The Iraqi Interior Ministry said that violence in Iraq hit a nearly two-year high during the month of July. A total of 325 people were killed in July, although 123 people were killed on a single day—July 23—when a series of coordinated attacks tore through the country. – *CNN, August 1*

August 1, 2012 (YEMEN): Purported al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) militants attacked a security headquarters in Jaar, killing four soldiers. AQAP controlled the town of Jaar until the military recaptured it in June 2012. – *AP, August 1*

August 1, 2012 (SOMALIA): A suicide bomber attempted to attack a national conference on a draft constitution, but was shot to death before he could detonate his explosives. A second suicide bomber blew himself up near the perimeter of the facility, injuring six police officers. Both bombers wore government uniforms. The new draft constitution was approved by Somalia's constituent assembly. – *Reuters, August 1; Voice of America, August 1*

August 2, 2012 (SPAIN): Spanish authorities arrested three suspected al-Qa`ida militants who were allegedly plotting to attack in "Spain and/or other European countries." The suspects—a Russian, a Russian of Chechen descent, and a Turk—were in possession of explosives. Spain's interior minister said that the men had been in Spain for about two months, and were under surveillance for several weeks. He also said that the suspects were "clearly not acting as lone wolves." Authorities suggested that the men may have been planning to attack a shopping mall in Gibraltar. – *Christian Science Monitor, August 2; New York Times, August 2; CNN, August 6*

August 3, 2012 (GERMANY): Prosecutors charged a 26-year-old German man with membership in an Islamist terrorist organization and helping to prepare attacks in Afghanistan. The suspect is accused of traveling to the Afghan-Pakistan border area in 2009 to be trained in weapons and explosives. He is also accused of participating in an attack on a joint U.S.-Afghan military base in Afghanistan in 2009. He was arrested

in Turkey in July 2010 and extradited to Germany in early 2012. – *AP, August 3*

August 3, 2012 (AFGHANISTAN): Hundreds of suspected Taliban militants launched simultaneous attacks in Kunar Province, killing an Afghan soldier and female civilian. The attacks struck five districts, including Watapur, Manogay, Marawara, Shigal and Dangam. – *RFE/RL, August 3*

August 3, 2012 (KENYA): A suspected suicide bomber wounded nine people near a military airbase in Nairobi. The bomber, who detonated a grenade, was likely trying to target a group of soldiers in a Somali-dominated area of the capital. – *Reuters, August 3*

August 3, 2012 (NIGERIA): A suicide bomber tried to kill the emir of Fika, who is also the chairman of the Yobe State Council of Chiefs, at a mosque. A policeman noticed that the bomber was trying to get near the emir, and confronted him. The bomber then detonated his explosives, injuring four people. – *Daily Times Nigeria, August 3; AFP, August 3*

August 4, 2012 (YEMEN): A suicide bomber attacked a gathering in Jaar organized by an anti-al-Qa`ida leader, killing at least 45 people. Ansar al-Shari`a claimed responsibility for the attack. – *Bloomberg, August 5; Reuters, August 5*

August 4, 2012 (YEMEN): A suspected U.S. drone killed three suspected militants in Hadramawt Province. – *Reuters, August 5*

August 5, 2012 (NIGERIA): A suicide bomber in a vehicle attacked a military checkpoint in Damaturu, Yobe State, killing six soldiers and two civilians. Authorities blamed Boko Haram. – *Reuters, August 5*

August 6, 2012 (AFGHANISTAN): Eleven Afghan policemen reportedly defected to the Taliban in Musa Qala district of Helmand Province. According to the BBC, "It is the second such defection in recent weeks—a police commander and 13 junior officers joined the Taliban in western Farah Province in late July." – *BBC, August 6*

August 6, 2012 (YEMEN): A U.S. drone killed seven suspected militants in two vehicles in Rada, Bayda Province. – *AP, August 7*

August 6, 2012 (RUSSIA): A suicide bomber killed four people in Chechnya, including two officers and a soldier. – *al-Jazira, August 6*

August 7, 2012 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide bomber in a truck rammed into the gate of a NATO base in Logar Province. No deaths were reported. The Taliban claimed responsibility. – *AP, August 7*

August 7, 2012 (AFGHANISTAN): A remote-detonated bomb exploded along a road outside Kabul, killing at least eight people in a minibus. According to the *New York Times*, "The target may have been another vehicle carrying workers to their jobs at the Defense Ministry, some of them in military uniforms. The ministry vehicle was traveling behind the minibus carrying civilians...and the bomber may have gotten the timing wrong when setting off the explosives." – *New York Times, August 7*

August 7, 2012 (AFGHANISTAN): Two men wearing Afghan army uniforms killed a U.S. soldier in Paktia Province. – *AP, August 10*

August 7, 2012 (YEMEN): A U.S. drone targeted a vehicle in Hadramawt Province, killing three suspected militants. – *AP, August 7*

August 8, 2012 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide bomber killed three NATO troops and one civilian in Kunar Province. – *AP, August 8*

August 9, 2012 (AFGHANISTAN): Two Afghan soldiers tried to kill a group of NATO troops outside a military base in eastern Afghanistan. There were no NATO casualties, and one of the assailants was shot to death by return fire. – *AP, August 10*

August 9, 2012 (YEMEN): A senior Yemeni military officer was killed after a bomb planted in his car exploded in Mukalla, Hadramawt Province. Authorities blamed the incident on al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula. – *Reuters, August 10*

August 10, 2012 (AFGHANISTAN): An Afghan police officer killed three U.S. Marines in Sangin district, Helmand Province. – *CNN, August 10; AP, August 10*

August 10, 2012 (IRAQ): A suicide bomber in a truck attacked a Shi`a mosque in Mosul, Ninawa Province, killing at least five people. – *Reuters, August 10*

August 10, 2012 (IRAQ): Gunmen killed four anti-al-Qa`ida fighters near Dujail, 50 miles north of Baghdad. – *AP, August 10*

August 10, 2012 (SYRIA): The Associated Press quoted U.S. intelligence officials as saying that al-Qa`ida is expanding in Syria, and is now building a network of well-organized cells. – *AP, August 10*

August 11, 2012 (AFGHANISTAN): A suspected Taliban infiltrator shot to death 11 Afghan policemen in Delaram district of western Nimroz Province. – *AAP, August 12*

August 14, 2012 (AFGHANISTAN): Three suicide bombers killed at least 20 people in Zaranj, Nimroz Province. – *AP, August 14*

August 15, 2012 (ALGERIA): Authorities arrested three armed Islamists in Berriane, located in southern Algeria. One of the men was identified as Abderrahmane Abou Ishak Essoufi, a senior member of al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb. The men were apprehended while traveling toward the Sahel border. – *AFP, August 20*

August 16, 2012 (AFGHANISTAN): A NATO helicopter crashed in Kandahar Province, killing 11 people, including seven NATO troops. The Taliban said they shot down the aircraft, although NATO would not confirm that claim. – *AP, August 16*

August 16, 2012 (IRAQ): A series of bombings tore through Iraq, killing more than 70 people. – *Reuters, August 16*

August 16, 2012 (PAKISTAN): At least nine Taliban fighters attacked Pakistani Air Force Base Minhas in Kamra, killing one security official. According to Fox News, "the militants scaled a wall surrounding the air base following the intense rocket barrage and a two hour-plus gunfight ensued. … Security forces were able to retake the base, but one soldier and the nine militants were killed." Some experts believe that the base in Kamra may be linked to Pakistan's nuclear weapons arsenal. – *Fox News, August 16*

August 18, 2012 (AFGHANISTAN): A NATO airstrike killed at least 20 Taliban insurgents who gathered to oversee a public execution in Chapa Dara district, Kunar Province. – *New York Times, August 18*

August 18, 2012 (PAKISTAN): A suicide bomber in a vehicle killed five people, including members of the Frontier Corps, at a checkpoint in a Quetta suburb. – *AP, August 18; AFP, August 18*

August 18, 2012 (YEMEN): Suspected members of al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula attacked Yemen's intelligence services headquarters in Aden, killing at least 14 Yemeni soldiers and security guards. The BBC reported that "the militants attacked the building from two sides, firing rocket-propelled grenades and automatic weapons inside." – *Washington Post, August 18; BBC, August 18*

August 18, 2012 (RUSSIA): Masked gunmen wounded eight worshippers at a mosque in Dagestan. – *al-Jazira, August 18*

August 19, 2012 (IRAQ): A car bomb exploded next to the convoy of a prominent Iraqi Sunni cleric, critically wounding him and killing four of his bodyguards. The cleric, Mehdi al-Sumaidai, recently urged Islamist militant groups in the country to end their insurgency. The incident occurred in Baghdad. – *Reuters, August 19*

August 19, 2012 (YEMEN): A suicide bomber killed the leader of a pro-army militia in Mudiya, Abyan Province. Authorities blamed al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula. – *AFP, August 19*

August 19, 2012 (RUSSIA): A suicide bomber detonated his explosives as policemen in southern Russia gathered at the funeral of a colleague. The blast, which occurred in Ingushetia, killed at least seven policemen. – *AP, August 19*

August 21, 2012 (AFGHANISTAN): An insurgent rocket attack damaged the plane of U.S. General Martin E. Dempsey as it sat parked on a runway in Bagram. "Indirect fire at Bagram is not unusual, so we don't believe his aircraft was targeted," said a Pentagon spokesperson. – *AP, August 21*

August 21, 2012 (IRAQ): An Iraqi man living in Kentucky pleaded guilty in federal court to plotting to assist al-Qa`ida in Iraq. The man, Mohanad Shareef Hammadi, was arrested in May 2011 and admitted to targeting U.S. forces in Iraq. His accomplice, Waad Ramadan Alwan, pleaded guilty to a number of terrorism charges in December 2011. – *CNN, August 21*

August 21, 2012 (PAKISTAN): A U.S. drone reportedly killed Badruddin Haqqani in North Waziristan Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. The Taliban refused to officially confirm Badruddin's death, although Afghan and Pakistani officials, as well as a senior Taliban leader, said that Badruddin died in the strike. Badruddin is considered the operations commander in the Haqqani network, and is the son of the network's founder, Jalaluddin Haqqani. – *Wall Street Journal, August 26*

August 23, 2012 (PAKISTAN): Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) e-mailed Pakistani media outlets, claiming that the group had established a "suicide bombers squad" to attack Pakistani troops if an offensive is launched in North Waziristan Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. – *PakTribune, August 23*

August 24, 2012 (AFGHANISTAN): A NATO airstrike killed senior Pakistani Taliban commander Mullah Dadullah, along with 12 other militants, at a compound in Kunar Province. Dadullah was the leader of the Pakistani Taliban faction in Bajaur Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. According to the *New York Times*, "Mullah Dadullah, also the name of an Afghan commander of the Taliban who was killed in 2007, was the nom de guerre of Jamal Said, a prayer leader from the village of Damadola, in Bajaur. He rose through the ranks of the Pakistani Taliban and in 2008, headed its vice and virtue department, enforcing strict edicts based on a narrow interpretation of Islamic texts." Dadullah became the leader of the Pakistani Taliban faction in Bajaur after the Taliban leadership fired his predecessor, Faqir Muhammad, for participating in peace talks with Islamabad. – *New York Times, August 25*

August 24, 2012 (PAKISTAN): U.S. drones fired missiles at three militant hideouts in North Waziristan Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, killing 18 suspected insurgents. – *AP, August 24*

August 26, 2012 (AFGHANISTAN): Insurgents attacked a checkpoint in Washir district, Helmand Province, killing 10 Afghan soldiers. Five other soldiers were either kidnapped or joined the assailants. – *AP, August 26*

August 26, 2012 (AFGHANISTAN): Suspected Taliban militants beheaded 17 Afghan civilians, including two women, in Kajaki district of Helmand Province. – *Voice of America, August 27*

August 26, 2012 (PAKISTAN): Dozens of insurgents from Afghanistan crossed into Pakistan and attacked an anti-Taliban militia post in Bajaur Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. One soldier and 20 militants were killed. – *AP, August 26*

August 27, 2012 (AFGHANISTAN): An Afghan soldier shot to death two U.S. troops in Laghman Province. – *Wall Street Journal, August 27*

August 27, 2012 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide bomber in a vehicle exploded in Kandahar, killing four civilians. The bomb appeared to target Abdul Raziq, Kandahar's police chief, but he was not injured. Raziq is leading a strong campaign against insurgents in Kandahar, the Taliban's former stronghold. – *Voice of America, August 27; New York Times, August 28*

August 27, 2012 (SOMALIA): African Union and Somali troops captured the port of Marka from al-Shabab. Somalia's al-Shabab militant group has suffered a string of losses recently, and it now only controls two other ports: Barawe and Kismayo. – *AFP, August 27*

August 27, 2012 (KENYA): Unidentified militants shot to death a Muslim cleric in Mombasa. The cleric had been previously accused by the United States of helping Islamist militants in Somalia. The killing sparked large protests, with angry rioters smashing vehicles and setting churches on fire. –*Reuters, August 27*

August 28, 2012 (AFGHANISTAN): A roadside bomb hit an Afghan army convoy in Kunar Province. When soldiers exited their vehicle, a suicide bomber on foot detonated explosives, killing five Afghan troops. – *Dawn, August 29*

August 28, 2012 (PAKISTAN): Pakistani Taliban militants based in neighboring Afghanistan's Kunar Province crossed into Pakistan and attacked Pakistani troops in Bajaur Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. After the attack, 15 soldiers were missing. On August 31, the Pakistani Taliban released a video showing the severed heads of a dozen Pakistani soldiers. – *New York Daily News, August 31; Voice of America, August 31*

August 28, 2012 (RUSSIA): A female suicide bomber killed Said Atsayev, a leader of Sufi Muslims in the region, in Dagestan. The blast also killed six of Atsayev's followers. The bomber was later identified as Aminat Saprykina, an ethnic Russian woman who lost two husbands—both militants—in the North Caucasus conflict. At the time of her death, she was married to another wanted militant. – *AP, August 28; Reuters, August 28; RFE/RL, August 29*

August 28, 2012 (RUSSIA): A border guard shot and killed seven servicemen at a frontier post in Dagestan. The guard was killed by return fire. – *Reuters, August 28*

August 29, 2012 (IRAQ): Gunmen killed Iraqi Brigadier General Nadhim Tayih in Baghdad. The general was the head of police emergency responders in west Baghdad. – *AFP, August 30*

August 29, 2012 (PAKISTAN): Pakistani Taliban fighters killed at least eight Pakistani soldiers in South Waziristan Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. – *New York Times, August 29*

August 31, 2012 (THAILAND): Suspected Malay-Muslim separatists executed a wave of bombings in southern Thailand, wounding two soldiers. The "bomb-like" devices were planted in at least 60 locations in Narathiwat and Pattani provinces, although most of the devices were fake. – *Reuters, August 31*